THE ® **saint**

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

dec.

35¢

Edited by LESLIE CHARTERIS

The Hard Man
by RICHARD DEMING

Death at Winchona
by LAWRENCE G. BLOCHMAN

The Adopted Daughter
by MELVILLE DAVISSON POST

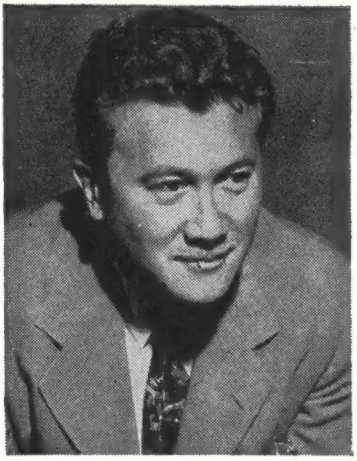
The Art of Murder
by NORMAN DANIELS

The Hood is a Bonnet
by WILLIAM O'FARRELL

THE BIGGER GAME

A NEW SAINT STORY by LESLIE CHARTERIS

SOME OLD, SOME NEW — THE FINEST IN MYSTERY FICTION



The people who write, edit, and publish a magazine like this have to be a rugged lot. Not that they must be personally capable of performing the same kind of aggressions that they deal in, but they do need some of the resilience to punishment of the type of private eye who gets beaten to a pulp in every third chapter.

To any busybody who is looking for a suit of tinplate crusader's armor to strut in, crime fiction seems to offer an irresistible target. Whether he takes his valiant whack at it in the form of comic strips, television, books, or magazines, he has the comforting assurance that he runs little risk of being hit back. These are entertainment media which cannot interrupt their performance to argue with hecklers. I have read with indignation an article in which the comics were called "blueprints for delinquency"; but even if I wanted to devote a panel in my own comic strip to give my opinion of the author of that statement, no newspaper editor would print it. He would take the attitude that it is not my place to argue, and anyhow we are on shaky enough ground already, and must be careful not to offend any more pressure groups than are gunning for us right now, lest we end up behind a full official censorship.

It is therefore a rare privilege to have this page of my own on which to be able to state my own dogma, which is that all these charges are nothing but abysmal tripe.

There is stuff produced in all popular fields which some people may regard as crude, indecent, sadistic, or in various ways objectionable. There is a great deal of it which would never get into THE SAINT. But this is because we prefer to think of ourselves, editorially, as guardians of quality and good taste rather than of public morals.

When I was a boy, the accepted classics and common fare for youthful reading were much gorier and exquisitely nightmare-breeding than anything I find around these days. And in those days there was no problem of juvenile delinquency.

We claim that in this magazine we are only giving you a harmless vicarious safety-valve for the devil that you know very well is in you, with no risk of ending up in jail. That is, if you paid for your copy.

THE ® saint MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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THE SAINT MYSTERY MAGAZINE, December 1961, Vol. 15, No. 2. Published monthly by FICTION PUBLISHING COMPANY, 331 Madison Avenue, New York 17, New York, by arrangement with Saint Magazines, Inc. Office of the editor—489 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, New York. Single copy price, 35¢. Subscriptions in U. S. A. and Canada, $4.00 per year. Subscription in foreign countries, $5.00 per year. Names of people and places are fictitious and any use of the name of an actual person or place is purely coincidental. Printed in U. S. A. Copyright 1961 by Fiction Publishing Company.

the bigger game

by . . . Leslie Charteris

Many weird duels have been fought, but this would be one of the most fantastic. . . .

BECAUSE I once translated the autobiography of Juan Belmonte, one of the historically greatest bullfighters of them all, with what I hoped was an authoritative introduction, Simon Templar has by association been assumed by some readers to be an *aficionado* himself, or even a graduate practitioner of the art. In one interview an English reporter, who had received disappointing replies to a few leading questions designed to show up the Saint's devotion to bullfighting, which could in print be either pilloried or ridiculed according to the delightful convention of most English interviewing, complained peevishly: "You sound so lukewarm about it—have you lost your *afición*?"

"I just haven't been in any of the countries where they do it, lately," said the Saint.

"And you don't miss it? I'd have expected a man like you to want to try it himself, like other people take up golf. Haven't you ever tried to stand up to a bull with a cape?"

"If I told you about my greatest moment in that line," said the Saint equably, "you'd either splash it all over your paper, which would be a breach of confidence, or you wouldn't believe me, which would

TAKE A BULLFIGHTER, A BIG GAME HUNTER, AND AN ACTRESS ADDICTED TO DANGER LIKE A DRUG—AND ONLY THE SAINT COULD BE THE REFEREE.

hurt my pride. So let's save us both embarrassment by trying some other subject. After all, burglars can make just as big headlines as bullfighters."

In simple fact, Simon had tried his cape-work against very young bulls at round-up time on the *fincas* of a couple of breeders whom he had known in Spain, and his natural grace and superb reflexes had caused some of the privileged observers to proclaim perhaps extravagantly that he was a born phenomenon whose refusal to make it a career would be a disaster through which tauromachy would continue irreparably impoverished. But he had never taken any but a spectator's part in any formal *corrida,* and in spite of the aciduous journalist's imputation he had never felt any ambition to.

Nevertheless the Saint's last answer, like many of his smoothest evasions, was only a bald truth which it privately amused him to veil and confuse.

He did actually, once, make a *quite* such as no matador up to and including Belmonte ever dreamed of, or is likely to dream of since, except in nightmares.

(I must intrude myself again here to mention that what I have just italicized has no connection with the English word "quite", meaning "moderately", as in a phrase like "quite nice", often pronounced "quaite naice": this one is pronounced in Spain something like *key-tay,* and in a formal bullfight refers to the work of luring the bull away from a fallen *picador,* the lancer on the horse which the bull has felled, despite the squeals of Anglo-Saxon tourists in the stands, who as charter members of some SPCA do not regard human beings as animals that should not be cruelly treated. *Aficionados,* who may be more sentimental, rate the *quite* as a rather valiant job, sometimes almost heroic.)

Simon Templar really did think of the hunting of criminals sometimes as a sport, and infinitely more exciting than the pursuit of the much less cunning and dangerous quarry which satisfies other self-designated sportsmen. But just as devotees of the more generally accepted versions of the chase rate some forms as more challenging than others, to the Saint one of the supreme refinements was to spot the villain *before* he became the answer to a whodunit, or to anticipate the crime before the perpetrators had finally decided to commit it.

Sometimes, Simon maintained, a man is ineluctably marked for murder. He may be the political candidate with the reform platform in a town that doesn't want to be reformed, the crook who has decided to squeal on a powerful racket, the inconvenient husband who stands in the way of somebody's hot ideas for a reshuffle —there are many obvious possibilities. But since murders, like

marriages, require at least two participants, the consummation requires an inexorable aggressor as well as a predestined victim.

There was an evening in London when the Saint felt sure he had met both together. This was at the bar of the White Elephant, which was a supper club where in those days you might run into anyone that you read about in the papers, and frequently did.

The slight swarthy man with the burning black eyes and the ugly scar in one temple he recognized instantly as Elías Usebio, who had been called the greatest matador since Manolete: Simon had never seen him in the ring, but that scimitar profile had been widely caricatured, especially since his sensational wedding and equally publicized retirement a year ago.

Iantha Lamb, whom he had married, or who had married him, would have been ecstatically recognized by many millions more to whom he was only a name which they were still very vague about, such being the more international scope of motion pictures and their attendant publicity. Iantha Lamb was a movie star, if not of the first magnitude, at least a luminary to gladden the box office. Although there were sourpouts who sneered that she acted better in bedrooms than before cameras, except for certain films which her first husband had spent a small fortune buying up, anything that she did was news and she had worked hard at making it newsworthy. Her assiduously advertised weakness was for men who lived with death at their elbow—racing drivers, lion tamers, deep-sea divers, test pilots, soldiers of fortune, young men on a flying trapeze, anyone whose luck had more chances to run out than that of most people. Her wild romances with these statistical bad bets had filled more columns of print than her thespian achievements ever earned, culminating with her marriage to Usebio, the *torero* who until he cut his pigtail had been generally rated most likely to become an obituary.

"You were sensational then, Elías," she said almost wistfully. "Nobody who hasn't seen you in a *corrida* can imagine how wonderful you were. Every time you stepped out into the ring, I died. But you always lived, and that was more wonderful still."

"And now I expect to go on living," Usebio said indulgently, "until I am knocked down on the sidewalk by a runaway bus."

"Does that mean that you lost your nerve?" asked the other man who was with them.

He was much taller and bigger, with the fine mahogany tan which develops on a certain type of Englishman, but as a rule only when he has been exiled for a long time to colonies where the sun shines more consistently than it normally does at home. He had large white

teeth to contrast with his complexion, and an outdoors man's interesting crowfoot wrinkles to point up his light gray eyes, and the ideal dusting of gray in his hair to give it all distinction without making him seem old.

He too was recognizable—in a lesser degree, but Simon happened to have read an article about him not long before, in the kind of magazine one thumbs through in waiting-rooms. His name was Russell Vail, and he was what is rather oddly called a white hunter: that is, he guided package-priced adventurers to the haunts of wild animals, told them when to shoot, and finished off the specimens that they wounded or missed, never forgetting that a satisfied client must go home not only with a soporific supply of anecdotes but also with the hides, heads, and horns to prove them. He had chaperoned a number of Hollywood safaris into Darkish Africa and had written a book about it, which made him a personality too.

"I only decided not to be stupid," Usebio said quietly. "It is a matter of arithmetic. Even if you are very good, every afternoon there is a chance for the bull to get you. Each time you go out, he has more chances. If you shoot at a target often enough, no matter how difficult it is, one day you must hit it. Too many bullfighters have forgotten that. They say 'In one year, three years, when I am forty, I will retire.' But before that, they meet a bull who does not know the date. There is only one time when you can say you retire and be sure of it. That is when you are alive to say you will not fight again, not even once more."

"Quit while you're ahead, eh?" Russell Vail said heartily. "Well, that's how the sharpies play cards."

"Elías was always very brave," Iantha Lamb said. "All the critics always said that."

"So, I had been lucky, and I was well paid, and I had not lived foolishly, as many bullfighters do. I was a rich man. I did not have to go on fighting, except for a thrill. And then I discovered a much greater thrill—to go on living, and be the husband of Iantha. That was the surprise present I gave her on our honeymoon."

"And what a surprise," she said pensively. "The last thing I ever expected. But don't blame it on me. I never asked for it."

Usebio looked up almost in pain, and said: "Who spoke of blame? I wanted to give you my life, and how could I give it if I did not have it?"

There was a slightly awkward silence, and Russell Vail ordered another round of drinks.

Simon, who had been eavesdropping unashamedly, was suddenly aware of Iantha Lamb's huge slanting elfin eyes fixed on him with an intensity of the kind which every attractive male learns to interpret

eventually, no matter how much modesty he may have started life with. He only met her gaze for a moment and then concentrated on stirring the ice in his Peter Dawson, but he could still feel her watching him.

Russell Vail took a hefty draught from his fresh glass and started up again.

"All this stuff about getting killed, Elías—honestly, aren't you making a bit much of it? Fox-hunters get killed. Football players get killed. House painters get killed. Even ordinary pedestrians get killed on the streets. Considering how many bullfighters there must be in Spain and Mexico, do they really have such a lot of accidents?"

"It is not the same," Usebio said patiently, though a sensitive ear could detect the underlying effort. "The fox is not trying to kill the hunter. The public does not want a house painter to come as close as he can to falling off his ladder."

"Oh, yes, your bullfight fans want their thrill. But even a fox has a more sporting chance. The bull *never* gets away, does he?"

"He is not intended to. It is so difficult to explain to an Anglo-Saxon. But bullfighting is not a sport. It is an exhibition, to let the matador show his skill and courage."

"By tormenting a wretched hunk of beef that's doomed before he starts?"

Vail smiled all the time, blazoning good nature with gleaming incisors.

"It is no more a hunk of beef than those African buffalo I have heard you speak of," Usebio said.

"But they aren't shut up in a little arena, either. They're out in the open, where I have to find them—and they're just as likely to be hunting *me*!"

"And you have a big gun that can knock them over with one touch of your finger." The ragged scar on Usebio's forehead seemed to throb lividly as he raised a finger to it, though his voice did not change. "Did you ever come close enough to one for it to do something like this to you?"

Vail took another solid sip, and answered a little more loudly: "I'm not so bloody silly. I'm not trying to impress an audience. But even without taking unnecessary risks, a lot of chaps in my profession have got themselves killed. A lot more than toreadors, I wouldn't mind betting."

Usebio winced.

"I do not know about toreadors, except what I have seen in a French opera, *Carmen*. The men who do what I do are called *toreros*."

"All right, *toreros*—bullfighters—what's in a name?"

"Elías is being modest," his wife put in. "He's a *matador de torros*. That's more special than just any *torero*. It's like being a star instead of just any actor."

"I'm sorry," Vail said, smiling

more relentlessly than ever. "No offense meant. But I'd still like to know the figures."

"Well, does either of you know them?"

There was no immediate answer, and Simon Templar could not resist sneaking another glance at the trio to observe any non-verbal response. And once again, disconcertingly, the glance was trapped by Iantha Lamb's boldly speculative gaze.

This time he couldn't break the contact too hastily without looking foolish, and she said, while he was still caught: "Somebody should be umpiring this—how about you?"

Simon felt four more eyes converging on him simultaneously, but they didn't bother him. He said amiably: "I'm no statistician either."

"You don't look like one," she said. "You look much more interesting. What are you?"

That was one of the questions he always hated: the truth was far too complicated for ordinary purposes, and the easier falsehoods or flippancies became tedious after all the times he had tried them.

"I've been called a lot of things."

"What's your name?"

He decided that this was one situation where he might as well give it, and let the gods take it from there.

It was perhaps significant, if not surprising, that neither Vail nor Usebio had any reaction to it, other than astonishment at the reaction of Iantha Lamb, who seemed as if she would have been happy to swoon.

"My hero!" she crowed, while they looked understandably blank.

"Please," begged the Saint, as she slid off her stool and began to move towards him.

An expression of ineffable smugness came over her internationally fabled face. She looked exactly like the cat that had one paw on the mouse's tail.

"All right . . . for a price."

"Name it."

"Later," she said, in the husky undertone that had throbbed from a thousand sound tracks.

Possibly because of a linguistic advantage, Russell Vail was the first of her two escorts to recover.

"That's fine," he said, with unflagging joviality. "But can't we be introduced?"

She did that, formally. Usebio bowed with dignity. Vail shook hands, insisting on the grasp of his powerful paw.

"You must be something special," he said, "if you send Iantha like that." He might have been momentarily set back by the discovery that his consciously muscular grip was very gently but unmistakably equalled, but the check was barely perceptible. He went on, with the same geniality: "Did you ever do any big game hunting?"

"A little," said the Saint.

"Do you know anything about bullfighting?" Usebio asked.

"A little."

"Well, what do you think?" asked Iantha Lamb.

Simon shrugged.

"I think you'll never settle that argument with figures, anyhow. So *X* number of guys were killed at the battle of Waterloo, and *Y* number of guys were killed at El Alamein. What formula do you use to figure who was braver?"

"In other words," she insisted, "the only proof would be to test one against the other, like making a bullfighter go big-game hunting, or sending a big-game hunter into a bullfight."

"I'd like to see any bullfighter take on a buffalo with his bare hands," muttered Vail. "Or a rogue elephant. Or—

"Or a man-eating shark," Simon said. "Can both of them swim? . . . I'm not being facetious. There are different skills involved, as well as courage. A bullfighter might be a lousy shot. A big-game hunter probably wouldn't even know how to hold a cape. If you want to match a bullfighter and a big-game hunter on equal terms—present company excepted, I hope—the only fair way would be in some field where they're both amateurs."

Iantha Lamb pouted.

"What would you suggest?"

It was then perhaps that the Saint felt his first truly premonitory chill. For an academic conversation, the point didn't have to be pressed so hard. But he said lightly: "How about tiddly-winks? It's easier to arrange than shark wrestling."

She seemed petulantly disappointed, but Russell Vail grinned more widely as he emptied his glass.

"That's a great idea," he said. "But I've got a better one. Knives and forks and a juicy steak. Can we settle for that? I'm famished."

While he and her husband competed amicably for the bar bill, Iantha held the Saint with a stare of dramatic malevolence which in spite of its obvious exaggeration Simon felt was not entirely in fun.

"You don't get off so easily," she muttered. "I'm still holding you to the bargain we made."

"Any time," said the Saint cheerfully.

"Where are you staying?"

"At Grosvenor House."

"Our table is ready," Usebio said, with rigid correctness.

And that should have been the end of it, except for an epilogue that Simon might have read in the papers, for it was not the kind of situation that the Saint cared to meddle in. The sometimes fatal by-products of sharp-pointed triangles had crossed his path several times, but he did not seek them. Sometimes, however, they sought him.

He was finishing a rather late breakfast in his room the next morning when the telephone rang and a drowsy voice said: "Good morning. You see, I didn't forget."

"Maybe you're dreaming," he

said. "You sound as if you were still asleep."

"I wanted to try and catch you before you went out. Are you busy for lunch?"

As he hesitated for a second, she said: "Or are you backing out this morning? Last night you said *any time.*"

"I wasn't thinking of anything so daring and dangerous as lunch," he murmured.

She made a lazy little sound too deep to be a giggle.

"It still leaves the rest of the afternoon, doesn't it? Shall we make it the Caprice—at one?"

Somewhat to his surprise, she was punctual, and she had a fresher and healthier air than he had half expected. It was true that she wore too much makeup for daylight, for his taste, but that was not conspicuous in itself in one of the favorite lunching-grounds of London's show business. Even the Saint would have been less than human if he hadn't enjoyed the knowledge that he was observed and envied by a fair majority of the males in the restaurant.

"Gossip can't do me any harm," he remarked, "but did you think about it when you chose this place?"

"What could be more discreet?" she asked coolly. "If I'd suggested some cozy little hideaway, and anyone happened to see us there, they'd have something to talk about. But everybody meets everybody here—on business. It's so open that nobody wonders about anything."

"I see that you've studied the subject," he said respectfully. "And where is Elías?"

"Having lunch with a lawyer, in the sort of place lawyers go to."

"What kind of lawyer?"

She gave a short brittle laugh.

"About making a will. Not what you're thinking. Elías is a Catholic, of course. I'm not, but he's as serious as they make 'em. He couldn't ask for a divorce if I slept with his whole *cuadrilla* and broke a bottle over his head any time he came near me. When these Papists get married, they really mean 'till death do us part'."

Mario the presiding genius came to their table himself and said: "Did you ever try kid liver? It's much more delicate than calf's liver. I have a little, enough for two portions."

"I couldn't bear it," said Iantha, emoting. "A poor little baby goat! . . . I'll just have some vichyssoise and lamb chops."

"My heart bleeds for that poor little lamb," said the Saint. "I'll try the kid liver."

It was delicious, too, worthy of a place in any gourmet's memory; but he knew that she hadn't forced that meeting merely for gastronomic exploration.

"I suppose we're all inconsistent," he said, "but do you try to rationalize your choice of animals to be sentimental about?"

"Of course not. I just know how I feel."

"I suppose lamb is a meat, a kind of food you see in markets and restaurants. You don't associate it with a live animal. You're not used to eating goat, so you visualize it alive, gambolling cutely when it's young. But you don't think of fighting bulls as beef, and I don't expect you're used to eating lions."

"That's different. Lions and fighting bulls can kill you. So a man can prove something when he kills one. You should be an analyst—you've found my complex. There's something about danger and courage that gives me a terrific thrill."

"You'd 've loved it in ancient Rome, with the gladiators."

"I might have."

"And when they killed each other, it would 've been even more thrilling."

She bit her lip, but it was only a teasing play of little pearly incisors on a provocative frame of flesh.

"I've often wondered. I wish I could have seen it just once, for real, instead of in Cinemascope. I've always had this thing about brave men."

"Don't look at me. I'd like to be a coward, but I'm too scared."

"You don't have to make dialogue. I can be honest. You fascinate me. You always have, ever since I first read about you."

This was the moment of truth—to borrow a phrase from the clichés of tauromachy. The inevitable preliminary chit-chat had run its course, perhaps rather rapidly, in spite of the convenient restaurant punctuations for sampling and savoring. But now he was going to be cut off from the easier evasions. It was imminent in the velvet glow of her faintly mongolian eyes.

He took a carefully copious sip of the *rosé* which he had ordered for their accompaniment—it was a Château St. Roseline, delicately fruity, and an uncommon find in England, where the warm weather which fosters the appreciation of such summery wines is normally rarer yet.

"Tell me the worst," he said.

"I'd like to have an affair with you."

Simon Templar put down his glass with extreme caution.

"Does Russell Vail know about this?" he inquired.

"Yesterday I might have cared. Today I don't."

"But he kills lions. Even elephants."

"But you've killed *men,* haven't you?"

"Not for fun."

"But you have. And you will again—if someone doesn't do it to you first. That makes you bigger than either of them."

"I'm glad you brought in that 'either'," said the Saint. "Let's not forget your husband. Sometimes there's another angle on the 'till death do us part' bit, especially

among Latins. Sometimes the husband provides the necessary death —and it isn't his own."

"Don't try to pretend that frightens you."

"Some things do. Like the idea that you must be serious."

"Because I don't make any bones about it? Life is too short. This is something I want, and I hoped you might like it too. Why not make it easy for you?"

It is of course well known to all readers of noble and uplifting fiction, if there still are any, that any self-respecting hero's response to such a proposition is to smack the tramp sharply on the rump and tell her to go peddle her assets elsewhere. But how much saintliness can be reasonably asked of anyone, when the tramp happens to be an Iantha Lamb?

"May I think it over?" said the Saint.

She nodded calmly.

"But don't think too long—I'm leaving for Rome next week to start a picture. Unless you're in a travelling mood."

He wondered long afterwards what decision he might eventually have come to—he was not hidebound by any of the usual conventions, but there was something about the manner of her offer which reminded him uncomfortably of a decadent empress requesting the services of a vassal, a request that was almost a command and at the same time a favor. The impediment to reacting with proper indignation was that she actually was a kind of empress in the echelons of the twentieth century in which he was a kind of buccaneer, and her favor was an impossible pipe dream for which millions of men would have deliriously given everything that they owned. In all honesty, he sometimes thought that the only thing that stopped him from capitulating on the spot might have been an absurd reluctance to be the pushover which she had so many good reasons to expect.

More fortunately than he probably deserved, the dilemma was resolved for him that time at what could have been the last moment before it became crucial.

Two evenings later when he returned to Grosvenor House from the movie where he had finished the afternoon—it was a recent Iantha Lamb picture for which a billboard had caught his eye after lunch, and the curiosity of seeing it in this peculiar context had been too much for him—he found three telephone messages in his box recording attempts by Russell Vail to reach him during the day. The latest was time-stamped only minutes before, and Simon yielded to another curiosity and called the number it asked him to directly he got to his room.

"Glad I got you at last," boomed the hunter. "It's a bit late, I know, but I was hoping you could have dinner with us tonight. I mean,

with Iantha and Elías. We all thought you'd make a good fourth."

Simon reserved the observation that only an Iantha Lamb would consider herself and three men a good foursome. The breezy tone of Vail's voice seemed to dispose of a possibility which he had been half prepared for when he returned the call, that Vail might have had the phantasmagoric notion of warning him that trespassing rights on Elías Usebio's marital property were already bespoke. He had nothing else planned; and seeing Iantha again under the maximum conceivable chaperonage might help, somehow, to produce a solution to the problem which he had been trying to ignore.

"That's nice of you," he said.

"Fine. Suppose we pick you up at seven."

"I'll be downstairs."

"Don't dress up. We thought we'd drive out to a place in the country."

"Suits me."

"And one other thing. Could you bring along some of your professional gear—I mean, something to pick a lock with?"

The Saint's eyebrows edged upwards.

"There's something funny about this telephone," he said. "It sounded exactly as if you said you wanted to bring something to pick a lock with."

"I did."

"What sort of lock?"

"On a big iron gate. Don't worry—we're not going to steal anything. We'll explain it all later. But bring something. See you at seven."

Simon was waiting in the lobby when Vail came in, shook hands heartily, and looked around as if in search of some luggage that the Saint should have had with him.

"You didn't think I was joking about that lock, did you, old boy?"

Simon touched his breast pocket.

"If this gate isn't on a bank vault, I can probably handle it. If you've got a good reason."

"Later. I think it might appeal to you. But first, dinner."

In the back courtyard there was a shiny new Jaguar with Iantha Lamb at the wheel and a vacant seat beside her. As Simon approached it, he saw that Elías Usebio was already sitting in the back. The commissionaire opened the off-side front door with a flourish, and Vail nudged the Saint forward.

"The place of honor for the guest of honor," he said. "No argument, old boy. That's the drill."

Simon had no desire to argue. He made himself comfortable beside Iantha, and hoped that her husband and Vail were equally relaxed in the back seat.

"Are you afraid of women drivers?" she asked, as they ploughed into the traffic complex of Marble Arch.

"Not so much when I'm on their

side," he replied. "And when there's nothing to worry about but their own car—this *is* your own, I hope?"

"Elías just gave it to me the other day, to take to Rome. You notice it's built for driving on the right."

"I'm glad you've noticed that they drive on the left here," he said. "Elías might have to put off his retirement to buy you another if you broke it up."

"*He* wouldn't, but I would. He's the rich one. He's earned a lot more than I have, and hardly spent a *peseta*."

"I was not brought up to treat money like old newspapers," said Usebio gently.

"Or to pay ninety per cent income taxes," retorted his wife.

They were heading north, and the car moved as if it held the road only because it was perfectly disciplined, not because it didn't have the power to lift up and fly if it wanted to.

"Where are we going?" Simon inquired presently.

"St. Albans, first," said Iantha.

He thought that over.

"They've got some Roman ruins there," he said, "but you'll see much better ones when you get to Rome."

"They've got a good pub, too, Russell says."

"Is it so exclusive that we have to break into it?"

"We'll tell you about the lock business afterwards," said Vail. "We'll give you a good dinner first, and then see if you feel like tackling it."

The pub was quaintly named The Noke, but it had the air of substantial serenity which the connoisseur of English hostelries recognizes at once. They had cold dry martinis in the pleasantly timbered bar, except for Usebio, who would take nothing stronger than St. Raphaël. They ordered smoked salmon and roast grouse, which were excellent, as was the Château Smith Haut Lafitte which the proprietor suggested.

The conversation was brightly enjoyable but totally unimportant; only Usebio seemed a little apart and preoccupied with serious private thoughts, though his rare responses were unfailingly courteous. It would have been a perfectly pleasant and unquoteworthy dinner party except for the enigma that went with it, the motivation under which Simon had been included, which nobody would refer to any more. He had to reach back deliberately for the first psychic hunch he had had, and remind himself that both the other men were dealers in death by training and vocation.

For Russell Vail, in the ultimate analysis, was only a kind of professional butcher glamorized by the fact that he used a rifle instead of an ax; and the word *matador,* in Spanish, most literally means simply "killer." . . .

Simon could only wait; and at

last Vail paid the bill and they went outside. It was one of those cloudless summer nights that England can produce sometimes, in spite of her inclement reputation and the bad luck that dogs her meteorologists on the rare occasions when they venture to predict one, with a full moon that hung overhead like a stage lantern. Vail looked up at it with satisfaction, and said: "It couldn't be brighter in Kenya. Let's make the most of it."

As they approached the car, Iantha said to the Saint: "Would you like to drive?"

Without waiting for an answer, she slipped into the other front seat. Simon got in behind the wheel, and moved his seat back.

"Where to?"

"I'll have to look at the map."

She directed him out on A5, the highway historically known by the oddly prosaic name of Watling Street, which runs northwestwards across the countryside almost as straight as the proverbial crow's flight all the way to Shrewsbury, on foundations laid out by Roman surveyors in the days when Caesar's legions knew St. Albans by the name of Verulam. Simon bore down with his right foot, and the Jaguar responded in a way that reminded him of the mighty Hirondel which had been his beloved chariot in the young days of more uncomplicated adventure. But he was only able to enjoy that reminiscent exhilaration for a few minutes and half again as many miles before Iantha was warning him to slow down for a turning on the left. He saw the signpost as they swung into the secondary road, and had a wild preposterous presentiment that every sober habit of thought tried to reject. But after a couple more turnings in a couple of more crooked miles taken at more sedate speed, he knew that this was going to be a bad night for sober thinking when Russell Vail leaned forward behind him and said: "I think you'd better stop about here, old boy, wherever you can find a good place to park."

Simon brought the car to a stop, and said: "Is this where you want me to pick a lock?"

"We're close enough. We'd better walk the rest of the way."

"To Whipsnade?"

"You guessed it."

Whipsnade, it must be explained here for the benefit of readers who are not familiar with the British scene, is the pride of England's zoos—a park in which an assortment of animals acclimated from every continent on the globe roam in their suitably landscaped enclosures, behind bars and moats as tidily camoflaged as possible, from which sanctuaries they are privileged to study human beings in a semi-natural habitat.

The Saint did not move.

"I suppose it might be fun to steal a giraffe," he said. "But it'll be hard work getting it in this car."

"We aren't going to steal anything."

"Then you'll have to tell me what the game is, before we go any farther."

Elias Usebio stirred and said: "We are going to settle an argument—the argument we began the other night. He has challenged me to try my cape against an animal with horns that he will choose."

"And what does *he* do to prove anything?"

"I'll tackle anything with claws that Elias chooses, just using a native spear," answered Vail.

"And I thought there ought to be an impartial umpire, like when we picked you at the White Elephant," said Iantha. "Besides, we couldn't think of anyone else who could get us in."

For a few seconds Simon Templar was silent. The idea was as outrageous as anything he had ever heard, but that was not enough to take his breath away. Contemplated as a pure spectacle, it was an invitation that no epicure of thrills could have refused. The impudence of the assumption that he would be a party to its illicit procurement he could shrug off. He hesitated only while he thought of the reasons why it might be an honest and Saintly duty to put a stop to the whole project; and in the same space of time he realized absolutely that the contest would be decided sometime, somewhere, with or without him, and that the best thing he could do was to be there.

"All right," he said. "But we can't do it by the front gates."

"You mean *you* can't?" said Vail, in the jovially disparaging tone which he used so masterfully, which almost dared you to reveal yourself such a lout as to take offense. "And I'd heard you were the greatest cracksman since Raffles."

"I'm better," Simon said calmly. "But the main entrance would just be stupid. There are keepers' cottages all around there. The only animals we'd be likely to get near would be watchdogs."

"There speaks the expert. But I'm sure he'd know how to cope with the problem."

"I was there once, years ago," said the Saint slowly. "I remember that on the far side of the grounds, that would be the northeast, there were some enclosures that ran downhill, and you could walk around them, and then you were outside on a long slope with a fine view but only fields and pastures between you and a road I could see at the bottom. I think, since we've got to walk anyhow, if we found that road, there wouldn't be much to stop us hiking up the hill and into the back of the park."

Iantha handed him the map, and he studied it under the dashboard light.

Then he drove on again.

Nobody spoke another word be-

fore he stopped a second time. He got out and studied the skyline over a gate.

"This ought to do it," he said.

Usebio opened the trunk of the car and took out a folded bundle of cloth, and a short leaf-bladed spear which he handed to Vail. Simon unlatched the gate, and they followed Iantha through.

It was a steady climb of about three-quarters of a mile over rough grass. Simon set a pace which was intentionally geared to his estimate of the legs of Usebio, whom he didn't want to exhaust before his trial; he figured that no exertion of that kind should bother Vail. Iantha Lamb, who had worn a loose peasant skirt and flat-heeled shoes which he now realized must have been chosen less for modest simplicity than in shrewd preparedness for any eventuality, kept up without complaining. They negotiated three wire fences on the way, without much difficulty: after the first fifty yards, the moonlight seemed bright enough for a night football game.

Then presently it was not so bright as they approached the black shadows of the trees and shrubbery that capped the last acres of the rise; and suddenly, startlingly close, belled out a fabulously guttural warning that reverberated in the deepest chords of the human fear-instinct.

"A lion," Russell whispered lightly. "We picked a good guide."

"I got you in," said the Saint. "Now you take over."

In a moment they were on a narrow road, one of the painlessly macadamized trails on which safaris of short-winded suburbanites and their spoiled progeny were permitted, for an additional fee, to cruise among the fauna in their own little cars.

"I know where I am now," said Vail. "I came up this morning to look around."

He led them briskly along the road and then off to the right on another path that branched off it. The going was slower for a while under the shade of some trees and presently of a building from which came the grunts and rustlings of unseen beasts; then quite soon they were in the open again, and next to them was a fence of massive timber. The fence enclosed a very uncertain oblong about a hundred yards in its greatest length and half of that at its widest, on one side of which was an equally massive rough-hewn structure like a stable.

And standing out in the full glare of the moon, rotund, enormous, glistening, primeval, motionless, but evidently sensing their presence, was the animal.

Vail waved his hand towards it.

"There you are, Elias," he said. "Let's see what you can do with him."

"A rhinoceros," Iantha breathed.

"A beauty. Just arrived last week, and still not housebroken."

"But that isn't —"

"It has horns," Vail pointed out. "Two of 'em. You can see 'em from here. Just arranged tandem, instead of sideways like a bull. That might even make it easier. But it fits the terms of the dare. Of course, if Elías is scared to take it on..."

The matador stood looking at it, as immobile as the monster itself. The moonlight could not have shown any change of color, and his thin hawk's face was like a mask of graven metal in which the eyes gleamed like moist stones.

Then he climbed carefully over the barrier and began to walk slowly forward, opening his cape.

In the stillness, Simon could hear the breathing of his companions.

The rhinoceros allowed Usebio to advance several yards, with its glinting porcine stare turned directly towards him. Simon thought he had read somewhere that rhinos were near-sighted, but if so this one had certainly caught a scent that told it which way to look. Yet it stood for seconds like a grotesque prehistoric relic, with no movement except a stiffening of its absurdly disproportionate little piggy tail.

Usebio stopped with his feet together, turned partly sideways, and spread the cape, holding it up by the shoulders, in the classic position of citing a bull.

And with a snort the rhino exploded into motion.

It short chunky legs seemed to achieve no more than an ungainly trot, but the appearance was deceptive. There was barely time to realize what an acceleration it generated before it was right on top of Usebio. And Usebio stood his ground, turning harmoniously with the cape and leading the brute past him, gracefully but a little wide.

Iantha gasped, almost inaudibly.

The rhino blundered on a little way, turning in an astonishingly tight circle, and charged again. And again Usebio led it past him, a trifle closer, as if its nose were magnetized to the cloth, in a formal *verónica*.

The rhino scrambled around again, it seemed even faster, and launched itself at the lure a third time without pause.

And suddenly Iantha screamed, a small sharp cry as if something clammy had touched her.

It may have been that Usebio started to turn his head at the sound, or that it only divided his concentration for a fractional instant; certainly he was trying to work still closer to his animal, and he had not yet perfectly judged or adapted himself to the dimensions of a three-ton beast that was as broad as a boat. He carried the horns and the head safely past him, but it caught him solidly with its shoulder and flung him aside much as the fender of a speeding truck might have done. He fell eight feet away and lay still with his face in the dirt.

There are things that happen in decimals of the time that it takes to report or read them. Like this:

Simon looked at Vail and said: "Your cue?"

Vail showed his teeth and said: "Not me, old boy. I only bet I'd take on claws."

Simon grabbed the spear with one hand and smashed Vail's lips against his teeth with the other.

Vail stumbled back, falling.

Iantha's face was enraptured.

Simon vaulted the rail and came down running.

And all that had happened while the rhinoceros hesitated imperceptibly over renewing its assault on an object that had become limp and prostrate.

Then it caught sight of the Saint racing towards it, yelling insanely, and found a more interesting target for its fury. With a slobbery *whroosh!* it veered to meet him.

Simon tried the trick that he had seen *banderilleros* use when planting their darts in a bull during their phase of the fight. He swerved a little to his right, Usebio and the fallen cape being to his left; and then at the last moment that he dared he dug his heels and broke back diagonally to the left, at the same time hurling the spear towards the oncoming rhino's left jowl. The point could have made no more than a pinprick in the pachyderm's vulcanized hide, but it added its distraction to the surcourse, and the behemoth thundered by him with a momentum that even its own colossal power needed time to check.

In that dreadfully evanescent respite the Saint reached the cape, snatched it up, and spread it as he had been taught to do by friendly *toreros* at the testing of calves. In the one sideways glance he could spare, he saw Usebio rolling over and struggling to rise up on his hands and knees.

"A la barrera!" Simon shouted, and went on in Spanish, which would most clearly penetrate Usebio's daze: "I will keep him off. But hurry!"

Then the rhino was bearing down on him like an express train. He would not have apologized for the cliché. It seemed to shake the earth like the biggest locomotive that ever ran on the rails. But somehow he led it past him with the cape, not stylishly, but as best he recalled the movement.

It lurched and grunted and skidded around and came again. And again he made it follow the cloth instead of his body.

If Iantha Lamb had screamed again he would have laughed without a flicker of his eyes.

But he did get a glimpse of Usebio crawling painfully but with increasing strength towards the fence, and knew that he hadn't misinterpreted the collision which had felled the matador. Usebio had only been winded by a glancing blow, perhaps with a couple of

cracked ribs, but nothing worse. If he could only get out of the corral.

Three, four, five, six more times the Saint gave his best simulated *verónicas* to a rampaging homicidal quadruped which whirled and came back for more with a terrifying swiftness and relentless persistence that even the bravest Andalusian bull never matched. But neither would his technique and configurations have brought *olé's* from the captious critics in the *Plaza de toros* at Seville. This was a reproach that Simon had no leisure to fret about. He was busy enough keeping the most mean-tempered *Diceros africanus* that ever had the privilege of an introduction to European culture from eviscerating him with one of its anachronistic horns.

Somehow he was able to keep the performance going until Usebio had rolled under the low bar of the stockade, safely to one side of the segment towards which Simon was baiting the rhino, until he knew everything was all right and he shamelessly dropped the cape over its head and sprawled over the top banister just as his paleolithic playmate crashed into the posts like a beserk baby tank.

There were many more people outside than he had left there—men in uniforms and parts of uniforms and other clothes. He had been distantly aware of their arrival during his last passes but had been far too occupied to take much note of it.

"What d'you think you're doing?" demanded the ranking one unnecessarily.

"Settling a silly bet," Simon replied placatingly. "I know it was naughty of us, but there's no harm done."

The keeper turned his flashlight from Usebio, who was now standing up brushing off his clothes, to Vail, who was dabbing his mouth with a red-stained handkerchief.

"Oh, no? What about him?"

"He slipped trying to get over the fence first, when he saw the other fellow in trouble. It's nothing serious."

The beam swung on to Iantha Lamb and rested there, and someone sucked in his breath sharply.

"Why, isn't that —"

"Yes, it is," said the Saint. "And I'm sure you wouldn't want to get her a lot of bad publicity. Now if we made up to you for the trouble we've given you, couldn't we forget the whole thing?"

There was no conversation whatever on the way back to town, after Simon had walked down the hill and brought the car around to the main entrance. Iantha drove, again with the Saint beside her, though he had tried to offer the seat to Usebio.

"No," said the matador. "I shall be quite comfortable. The front is better for you, with your long legs."

He said nothing about the long legs of Russell Vail. He may have felt instinctively that it would be diplomatic not to make Vail and the Saint sit together, though he had asked no questions about Vail's puffy mouth. And Vail seemed to think it best not to reopen the subject in front of Usebio.

"You can drop me off at my sister's," Vail said, as they came down Abbey Road, and Iantha obviously knew where that was. Vail got out and said: "Good night. I'll call you tomorrow." He looked in at the Saint and said: "I hope I see you again soon."

"Any time," said the Saint, exactly as he had once said to Iantha.

She drove to Claridge's, and Usebio said: "I will get out, but you must take Mr. Templar home."

"Nonsense," said the Saint. "I'll get a taxi. Or I'd just as soon walk. She has to take care of you."

"To that, I say nonsense," said Usebio. "I am all right. Only a few bruises. I will sit in a hot bath and tomorrow I am all right. It is nothing like a *cornada.*" He was out of the car already, and put his hand in at Simon's window. "I insist. Tonight you saved my life. Is it so much to take you home? *Va con Diós, amigo.*" The thin lips smiled coldly, but the dark eyes glowed like hot colds. "You would have made a good bullfighter. You understand what is *pundonor.*"

The Jaguar pulled away, and Simon Templar leaned back at the fullest length that his seat would let him.

"Do you understand what is *pundonor?*" she asked at length.

"It's a sort of romantic-chivalric concept of an honor that's bigger than just ordinary honor, or honesty," he said very quietly and remotely. "A sort of inflexible pride that would make you go through with a bet to dive off the Brooklyn Bridge even after you found out that the East River was frozen solid."

She said: "Or that would make you try to live up to your reputation because a hero was needed, and there was nobody else around?"

"Russell isn't a coward," said the Saint. "Don't sell him short."

"Then why didn't he fight you after you hit him?"

"Because it was safer to be consistent, and go on looking like someone who couldn't have helped Elías. Why did you scream?"

"I couldn't help it. Something touched me, and with all those jungle creatures around I naturally thought of snakes, and —"

"And that was all you could think of."

"Russell must have goosed me."

The Saint sighed.

"It's possible. I wouldn't ask him, because he'd deny it anyhow. But somebody must have wanted Elías to die. It was thrilling, wasn't it?"

"You were wonderful."

"Morituri te salutamus—we who are about to die salute you. I think I said you were born in the wrong century. And if Elías had been killed, Russell and I could have fought it out. And if I killed him, some day some new young upstart would be challenging me. Just like the cave men."

They turned into the Grosvenor House courtyard off Park Street, and she braked the Jaguar and said: "Ask me in."

"I'm sorry," he said. "I don't want to be one of your gladiators."

In one smooth movement he was outside the car and she was staring out at him like a perplexed and perverse pixie.

"Nobody," she said in a low unbelieving voice — "nobody ever turned me down."

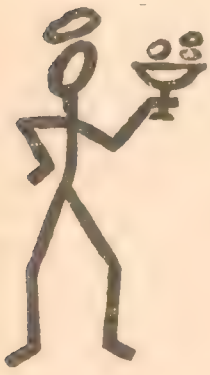
"That's why I'll still be the one man in your life that you'll never forget," he said wickedly. "And there's one other thing I want you to remember."

"What's that?"

"It's none of my business how you work out your personal problems with Elías. But if I ever hear of him having a fatal accident, it had better be very convincing. Or you can be sure that whatever the jury says, I shall take the trouble to arrange another accident for you. Please never forget that—darling."

He blew her a kiss off his fingertips, and smiled, and walked into the hotel.

NEXT MONTH—



JULIAN LAMANTIA

ONCE MORE MEETS

SIMON TEMPLAR

in

THE UNUSUAL ENDING

A SAINT STORY by LESLIE CHARTERIS

—in *THE SAINT MYSTERY MAGAZINE*

the adopted daughter

by . . . Melville Davisson Post

"Isn't she a beauty—eh, Randolph?"

Vespatian Flornoy had a tumbler of French brandy. He sucked in a mouthful. Then he put it on the table.

The house was the strangest in Virginia. It was of some foreign model. The whole second floor on the side lying toward the east was in two spacious chambers lighted with great casement windows to the ceiling. Outside, on this brilliant morning, the world was yellow and dried-up, sere and baked. But the sun was thin and the autumn air hard and vital.

My uncle, Squire Randolph, the old country doctor, Storm, and the host, Vespatian Flornoy, were in one of these enormous rooms. They sat about a table, a long mahogany piece made in England and brought over in a sailing ship. There were a squat bottle of French brandy and some tumblers. Flornoy drank and recovered his spirit of abandon.

Now he leered at Randolph, and at the girl that he had just called in.

He was a man one would have traveled far to see—yesterday or the

There is an ageless and haunting quality to the evil that is in this man who holds another life in his hands—his to crush, or to save—and a lesson if we keep in mind that this man is very much the product of his times—times which were not always noted, even in Girondist circles, for their understanding of values and of responsibilities taken for granted these days.

From: Uncle Abner, Master of Mysteries, 1918, New York.
Published by arrangement with the Estate of Melville Davisson Post.

day ahead of that. He had a figure out of Athens, a face cast in some forgotten foundry by the Arno, thick-curled mahogany-colored hair, and eyes like the velvet hull of an Italian chestnut. These excellencies the heavenly workman had turned out, and now by some sorcery of the pit they were changed into abominations.

Hell-charms, one thought of, when one looked the creature in the face. Drops of some potent liquor, and devil-words had done it, on yesterday or the day ahead of yesterday. Surely not the things that really had done it—time and the iniquities of Gomorrah. His stock and his fine ruffled shirt were soiled. His satin waistcoat was stained with liquor.

"A daughter of a French marquis, eh!" he went on. "Sold into slavery by a jest of the gods—stolen out of the garden of a convent! It's the fabled history of every octoroon in New Orleans!"

Fabled or not, the girl might have been the thing he said. The contour of the face came to a point at the chin, and the skin was a soft Oriental olive. She was the perfect expression of a type. One never could wish to change a line of her figure or a feature of her face. She stood now in the room before the door in the morning sun, in the quaint, alluring costume of a young girl of the time—a young girl of degree, stolen out of the garden of a convent! She had entered at Flornoy's drunken call, and there was the aspect of terror on her.

The man went on in his thick, abominable voice:

"My brother Sheppard, coming north to an inspection of our joint estate, presents her as his adopted daughter. But when he dropped dead in this room last night and I went about the preparation of his body for your inquisition—eh, what, my gentlemen! I find a bill of sale running back ten years, for the dainty baggage!

"French, and noble, stolen from the garden of a convent, perhaps! Perhaps! but not by my brother Sheppard. His adopted daughter—sentimentally, perhaps! Perhaps! But legally a piece of property, I think, descending to his heirs. Eh, Randolph!"

And he thrust a folded yellow paper across the table.

The Justice put down his glass with the almost untasted liquor in it, and examined the bill of sale.

"It is in form!" he said. "And you interpret it correctly, Flornoy, by the law's letter. But you will not wish to enforce it."

"And why not, Randolph?" cried the man.

"You take enough by chance, sir. You and your brother Sheppard held the estate jointly at your father's death, and now at your brother's death you hold it as sole heir. You will not wish, also, to hold his adopted daughter."

Then he added:

"This bill of sale would hold in the courts against any unindentured purpose, not accompanied by an intention expressed in some overt act. It would also fix the status of the girl against any pretended or legendary exemption of birth. The judges might believe that your brother Sheppard was convinced of this pretension when he rescued the child by purchase, and made his informal adoption at a tender age. But they would hold the paper, like a deed, irrevocable, and not to be disturbed by this conjecture."

"It will hold," cried the man, "and I will hold! You make an easy disclaimer of the rights of other men."

Then his face took on the aspect of a satyr's.

"Give her up, eh! to be a lady! Why Randolph, I would have given Sheppard five hundred golden eagles for this little beauty—five hundred golden eagles in his hand! Look at her, Randolph. You are not too old to forget the points—the trim ankle, the slender body, the snap of a thoroughbred. There's the blood of the French marquis, on my honor! A drop of black won't curdle it."

And he laughed, snapping his fingers at his wit.

"It only makes the noble lady merchandise! And perhaps, as you say, perhaps it isn't there, in fact. Egad! old man, I would have bid a thousand eagles if Sheppard had put her up. A thousand eagles! and I get her for nothing! He falls dead in my house, and I take her by inheritance."

It was the living truth. The two men, Vespatian Flornoy and his brother Sheppard, took their father's estate jointly at his death. They were unmarried, and now at the death of Sheppard, the surviving brother Vespatian was sole heir, under the law, to the dead man's properties: houses and lands and slaves. The bill of sale made the girl an item in the inventory of the dead man's estate.

The thing had happened, as fortune is predisposed to change, in a moment, as by the turning of dice.

At daybreak on this morning Vespatian Flornoy had sent a Negro at a gallop, to summon the old country doctor, Storm, Squire Randolph and my uncle Abner. At midnight, in this chamber where they now sat, Sheppard as he got on his feet, with his candle, fell and died, Vespatian said, before he could reach his body. He lay now shaven and clothed for burial in the great chamber that adjoined.

Old Storm had stripped the body and found no mark. The man was dead with no scratch or bruise.

He could not say what vital organ had suddenly played out—perhaps a string of the heart had snapped. At any rate, the dead man had not gone out by any sort of violence, nor by any poison. Every drug or herb that killed left its stamp and superscription, old

Storm said, and one could see it, if one had the eye, as one could see the slash of a knife or the bruise of an assassin's fingers.

It was plain death "by the Providence of God," was Randolph's verdict. So the Justice and old Storm summed up the thing and they represented the inquiry and the requirements of the law.

My uncle made no comment on this conclusion. He came and looked and was silent. He demurred to the "Providence of God" in Randolph's verdict, with a great gesture of rejection. He disliked this term in any human horror. "By the abandonment of God," he said, these verdicts ought rather to be written. But he seemed profoundly puzzled.

When the girl came in, at Vespatian's command, to this appraisal, he continued silent. At the man's speech, and evident intent, his features and his great jaw hardened, as though under the sunburned skin the bony structure of the face were metal.

He sat in his chair, a little way out beyond the table, as he sat on a Sunday before the pulpit, motionless, in some deep concern.

Randolph and Vespatian Flornoy were in this dialogue. Old Storm sat with his arms folded across his chest, his head down. His interest in the matter had departed with his inspection of the dead man, or remained in the adjoining chamber where the body lay, the eyelids closed forever on the land of living men, shut up tight like the shutters of a window in a house of mystery. He only glanced at the girl with no interest, as at a bauble.

And now while the dialogue went on and Storm looked down his nose, the girl, silent and in terror, appealed to my uncle in a furtive glance, swift, charged with horror, and like a flash of shadow. The great table had a broad board connecting the carved legs beneath, a sort of shelf raised a little from the floor. In her glance, swift and fearful, she directed my cousin's attention to this board.

It was a long piece of veneered mahogany, making a shelf down the whole length of the table. On it my uncle saw a big folded cloth of squares white and black, and a set of huge ivory chess-men. The cloth was made to spread across the top of the table, and the chessmen were of unusual size in proportion to the squares; the round knobs on the heads of the pawns were as big as marbles. Beside these things was a rosewood box for dueling-pistols, after the fashion of the time.

My uncle stooped over, took up these articles and set them on the table.

"And so, Flornoy," he said, "you played at chess with your brother Sheppard."

The man turned swiftly; then he drank his glass of liquor.

"I entertained my brother," he

said, "as I could! there is no coffee-house to enter, nor any dancing women to please the eye, in the mountains of Virginia."

"For what stake?" said my uncle.

"I have forgotten, Abner," replied the man, "—some trifle."

"And who won?" said my uncle.

"I won," replied the man. He spoke promptly.

"You won," said my uncle, "and you remember that; but what you won, you have forgotten! Reflect a little on it, Flornoy."

"Does it matter, Abner, a thing great or small? It is all mine today!"

"But it was not all yours last night," said my uncle.

"What I won was mine," replied the man.

"Now, there," replied my uncle, "lies a point that I would amplify. One might win, but might not receive the thing one played for. One might claim it for one's own, and the loser might deny it. If the stake were great, the loser might undertake to repudiate the bargain. And how would one enforce it?"

The man put down his glass, leaned over and looked steadily at my uncle.

Abner slipped the silver hooks on the rosewood box, slowly, with his thumb and finger.

"I think," he said, "that if the gentleman you have in mind won, and were met with a refusal, he would undertake to enforce his claim, not in the courts or by any legal writ, but by the methods which gentlemen such as you have in mind are accustomed to invoke."

He opened the box and took out two pistols of the time. Then his face clouded with perplexity. Both weapons were clean and loaded.

The man, propping his wonderful face in the hollow of his hand, laughed. He had the face and the laughter of the angels cast out with Satan.

"Abner," he cried, "you are hagridden by a habit, and it leads you into the wildest fancies!"

His laughter chuckled and gurgled in his throat.

"Let me put your theory together. It is a very pretty theory, lacking in some trifles, but spirited and packed with dramatic tension. Let me sketch it out as it stands before your eye. . . . Have no fear, I shall not mar it by any delicate concern for the cunning villain, or any suppression of his evil nature. I shall uncover the base creature amid his deeds of darkness!"

He paused, and mocked the tragedy of actors.

"It is the hour of yawning graveyards—midnight in this house. Vespatian Flornoy sits at this table with his good brother Sheppard. He has the covetousness of David the son of Jesse, in his evil heart. He would possess the noble daughter of the Latin marquis, by a sardonic fate sold at childhood into slavery, but by the ever watchful

Providence of God, for such cases made and provided, purchased by the good brother Sheppard and adopted for his daughter!

"Mark, Abner, how beautifully it falls into the formula of the tragic poets!

"The wicked Vespatian Flornoy, foiled in every scheme of purchase, moved by the instigation of the Devil, and with no fear of God before his eyes, plays at chess with his good brother Sheppard, wins his interest in the manor-house and lands, and his last goldpiece—taunts and seduces him into a final game with everything staked against this Iphigenia. The evil one rises invisible but sulphurous to Vespatian's aid. He wins. In terror, appalled, aghast at the realization of his folly, the good brother Sheppard repudiates the bargain. They duel across the table, and Vespatian, being the better shot, kills his good brother Sheppard!

"Why, Abner, it is the plan of the 'Poetics.' It lacks no element of completeness. It is joined and fitted for the diction of Euripides!"

The man declaimed, his wonderful fouled face, his Adonis head with its thick curled hair, virile and spirited with the liquor and the momentum of his words. Old Storm gave no attention. Randolph listened as to the periods of an oration. And my uncle sat, puzzled, before the articles on the table. The girl now and then, when the speaker's eyes were on my uncle, by slight indicatory signs affirmed the speech, and continued strongly to indicate the chess-men.

My uncle began to turn the pieces over under the protection of his hand, idly, like one who fingers about a table in abstraction. Presently he stopped and covered one of the pieces with his hand. It was a pawn, large, like the other chessmen, but the round ivory knob at the top of it was gone. It had been sawed off!

The man Flornoy, consumed with his idea, failed to mark the incident, and moved by the tenor of his speech, went on:

"This is the Greek plan for a tragedy. It is the plan of Athens in the fifth century. It is the plan of Sophocles and Aeschylus. Mark how it turns upon the Hellenic idea of a dominating Fate: a Fate in control over the affairs of men, pagan and not good. The innocent and virtuous have no gain above the shrewd and wicked. The good Sheppard dies, and the evil Vespatian takes his daughter, his goods and lands to enjoy in a gilded life, long and happy!"

He thought the deep reflection in my uncle's face was confusion at his wit.

"That ending would not please you, Abner. Luther and Calvin and John Wesley have lived after Aristotle assembled this formula in his 'Poetics'. And they will have the evil punished—a dagger in the

wicked Vespatian's heart, and the virgin slave, by the interposition of the will of Heaven, preserved in her virginity. And so you come, like the Providence of God, to set the thing in order!"

My uncle looked up at the man, his hand covering the mutilated pawn, his face calm in its profound reflection.

"You quote the tragic poets, with much pedantry," he said. "Well, I will quote them too: 'Ofttimes, to win us to our harm, the instruments of darkness tell us truth!' How much truth, in all this discourse, have you told us?"

"Now, Abner," cried the man, "if it is truth you seek, and not the imaginations of a theory, how much could there be in it? If it were not for the granite ledges of reality, one might blow iris-colored bubbles of the fancy and watch them, in their beauty, journey to the stars! But alas, they collide with the hard edges of a fact and puff out. . . . To begin with, the pistols have not been fired!"

"One could reload a pistol," replied my uncle.

"But one could not shoot a man, Abner, and leave no mark of the bullet on his body!"

He paused and addressed the old doctor.

"I sent for Storm, when I sent for Randolph, to rid me of every innuendo of a gossip. Ask him if there is a mark of violence on my brother's body."

The old man lifted his lined, withered face.

"There is no mark on him!"

"Are you sure?" he said. "Perhaps you might be mistaken."

The words were in the taunting note of Elijah to the priests of Baal.

The old man made a decisive gesture. *"Voilà!"* he said, "I have handled a thousand dead men! I am not mistaken!"

Vespatian Flornoy put up his hands as in a great, hopeless gesture.

"Alas, Abner," he said, "we must give up this pretty theory. It does honor to your creative instinct, and save for this trifle, we might commend it to all men. But you see, Abner Storm and the world will unreasonably insist that a bullet leaves a mark. I do not think we can persuade them against their experience in that belief. I am sorry for you, Abner. You have a reputation in Virginia to keep up. Let us think; perhaps there is a way around this disconcerting fact."

And he put his extended palm across his forehead, in mock reflection.

It was at this moment, when for an instant the man's face was covered, that the girl standing before the door made a strange indicatory signal to my uncle Abner.

Vespatian Flornoy, removing his hand, caught a glimpse of the girl's after-expression. And he burst out in a great laugh, striking the table with his clenched hand.

"Egad!" he cried. "By the soul of Satan! the coy little baggage is winking at Abner!"

He saw only the final composition of the girl's face. He did not see the stress and vigor of the indicatory sign. He roared in a pretension of jealous anger.

"I will not have my property ogle another in my house. You shall answer for this, Abner, on the field of honor. And I warn you, sir: I have the surest eye and the steadiest hand in the mountains of Virginia."

It was the truth. The man was the wonder of the countryside. He could cut a string with a pistol at ten paces; he could drive in a carpet-tack with his bullet, across a room. With the weapon of the time, the creature was sure, accurate to a hair, and deadly.

"No man," he cried, "shall carry off this dainty baggage. Select your weapon, Abner; let us duel over this seduction!"

He spoke in the flippancies of jest. But my uncle's face was now alight with some great comprehensive purpose. It was like the face of one who begins to see the bulk and outlines of a thing that before this hour, in spite of every scrutiny, was formless.

And to Flornoy's surprise and wonder, my uncle put out his hand, took up one of the pistols and suddenly fired it into the wood of the mantelpiece beyond the table. He got up and looked at the mark. The bullet was hardly bedded in the veneer.

"You use a light charge of powder, Flornoy," said my uncle.

The man was puzzled at this act, but he answered at once.

"Abner," he said, "that is a secret I have learned. A pistol pivots on the grip. In firing, there are two things to avoid: a jerk on the trigger, and the tendency of the muzzle to jump up, caused by the recoil of the charge. No man can control his weapon with a heavy charge of powder behind the bullet. If one would shoot true to a hair, one must load light."

"But, Flornoy," said my uncle, "if to kill were the object of a duelist, such a charge of powder might defeat the purpose."

"You are mistaken, Abner," he said. "The body of a man is soft. If one avoids the bony structure, a trifling charge of powder will carry one's bullet into a vital organ. There is no gain in shooting through a man as though one were going to string him on a thread. Powder enough to lodge the bullet in the vital organ is sufficient."

"There might be a point in not shooting through him."

The man looked calmly at my uncle; then he made an irrelevant gesture.

"No object, Abner, but no use. The whole point is to shoot to a hair, to lodge the bullet precisely in the point selected. Look how a light charge of powder does it."

And taking up the other pistol, he steadied it a moment in his hand, and fired at Abner's bullet-hole. No mark appeared on the mantle board. One would have believed that the bullet, if the barrel held one, had wholly vanished. But when they looked closely, it was seen that my uncle's bullet, struck precisely, was driven a little deeper into the wood. It was amazing accuracy. No wonder the man's skill was a byword in the land.

My uncle made a single comment.

"You shoot like the slingers of Benjamin!" he said.

Then he came back to the table and stood looking down at the man. He held the mutilated ivory pawn in his closed left hand.

"Flornoy," said Abner, "you have told us more truth than you intended us to believe. How did your brother Sheppard die?"

The man's face changed. His fingers tightened on the pistol.

"Damme, man," he cried, "do you return to that! Sheppard fell and died, where you stand, beside the table in this room. I am no surgeon to say what disorder killed him. I sent for Storm to determine that."

My uncle turned to the old eccentric doctor.

"Storm," he said, "how did Sheppard Flornoy die?"

The old man shrugged his shoulders and put out his nervous hands.

"I do not know," he said, "the heart, maybe. There is no mark on him."

And here Randolph interrupted.

"Abner," he said, "you put a question that no man can answer: something snaps within the body, and we die. We have no hint at the cause of Sheppard's death."

"Why, yes," replied my uncle, "I think we have."

"What hint?" said Randolph.

"The hint," said Abner, "that the eloquent Vespatian gave us just now in his discourse. I think he set out the cause in his apt recollection from the Book of Samuel."

Vespatian Flornoy got on his feet. His face and manner changed. There was now decision and menace in his voice.

"Abner," he said, "there shall be an end to this. I have turned your ugly hint with pleasantry, and met it squarely with indisputable facts. I shall not go any further on this way. I shall clear myself now, after the manner of a gentleman."

My uncle looked steadily at him.

"Flornoy," he said, "if you would test your innocence by a device of the Middle Ages, I would suggest a simpler and swifter method of that time. Wager of Battle is outlawed in Virginia. It is prohibited by statute, and we cannot use it. But the test I offer in its place is equally medieval. It is based on the same belief, old and persistent, that the Providence of God will indicate the guilty. And it is not against the law."

He paused.

"The same generation of men who believed in Wager of Battle, in the Morsel of Execration, in the red-hot plowshares, as a test of the guilt of murder, also believed that if the assassin touched his victim, the body of the murdered man would bleed!

"Flornoy," he said, "if you would have recourse to one of those medieval devices, let it be the last.... Go in with me and touch the body of your brother Sheppard, and I give you my word of honor that I will accept the decision of the test."

It was impossible to believe that my uncle Abner trifled, and yet the thing was beyond the soundings of all sense.

Storm and Randolph, and even the girl standing in the door, regarded him in wonder.

Vespatian Flornoy was amazed.

"Damme, man!" he cried, "superstitions have unhinged your mind. Would you believe in a thing like that?"

"I would rather believe it," replied my uncle, "than to believe that in a duel God would direct the assassin's bullet."

Then he added, with weight and decision in his voice:

"If you would be clear of my suspicion, if you would be free to take and enjoy the lands and properties that you inherit, go in before these witnesses and touch the dead body of your brother Sheppard. There is no mark appearing on him. Storm has found no wound to bleed. You are innocent of any measure in his death, you tell us. There's no peril to you, and I shall ride away to assure every man that Sheppard Flornoy died, as Randolph has written, by the 'Providence of God.'"

He extended his arm toward the adjacent chamber, and across the table he looked Flornoy in the face.

"Go in before us and touch the dead man."

"By the soul of Satan!" cried the man, "if you hang on such a piece of foolery, you shall have it. The curse of superstition sticks in your fleece, Abner, like a burr."

He turned and flung open the door behind him and went in. The others followed—Storm and Randolph behind the man, the girl, shaken and fearful, and my uncle Abner.

Sheppard Flornoy lay prepared for burial in the center of the room. The morning sun entering through the long windows flooded him with light; his features were sharply outlined in the mask of death, his eyelids closed.

They stood about the dead man, at peace in this glorious shroud of sun, and the living brother was about to touch him when my uncle put out his hand.

"Flornoy," he said, "the dead man ought to see who comes to touch him. I will open his eyes."

And at the words, for no cause or reason conceivable to the two

men looking on, Vespatian Flornoy shouted with an oath, and ran in on my uncle.

He was big and mad with terror. But even in his youth and fury he was not a match for my uncle Abner. Liquor and excess failed before wind and sun and the clean life of the hills. The man went down under my uncle's clenched hand.

It was Randolph who cried out, while the others crowded around the dead man and his brother unconscious on the floor.

"Abner," he said, "what is the answer to this ghastly riddle?"

For reply my uncle drew back the eyelids of the dead man. And stooping over, Randolph and old Storm saw that Sheppard Flornoy had been shot through the eye, and that the head of the ivory pawn had been forced into the bullet-hole to round out the damaged eyeball under the closed lid.

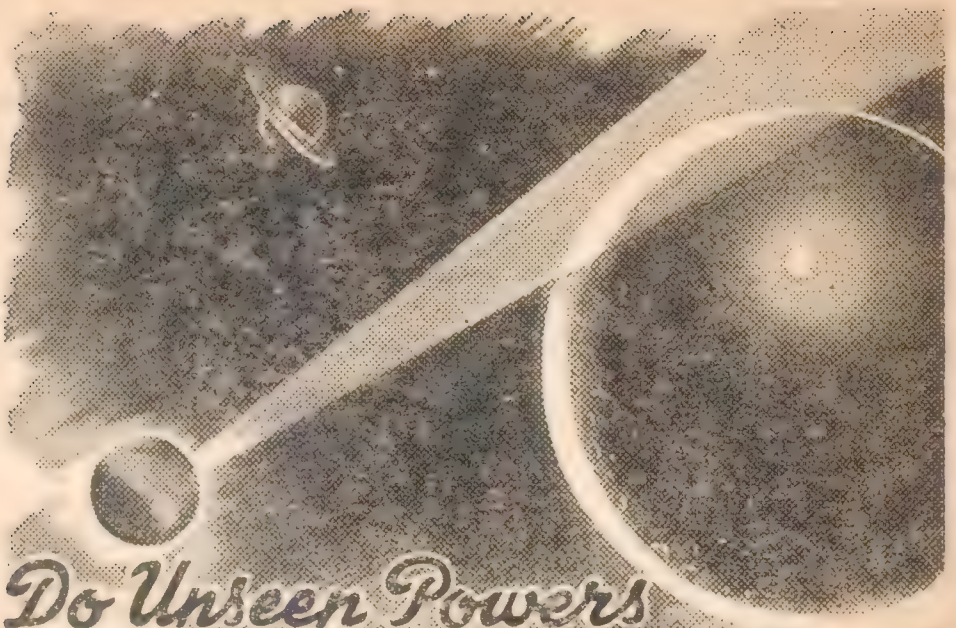
The girl sobbed, clinging to my uncle's arm. Randolph tore the bill of sale into indistinguishable bits. And the old doctor Storm made a great gesture with his hands extended and crooked.

"Mon Dieu!" he cried, in a consuming revulsion of disgust. "My father was surgeon in the field for Napoleon, I was raised with dead men, and a drunken assassin fools me in the mountains of Virginia!"

THE NEW FLYING SQUAD CHIEF

Colleagues rate Ernest Millen high among the great detectives of the world. The appointment of Detective Chief Superintendent Millen as chief of the Flying Squad in succession to the retiring Detective Chief Superintendent Sparks is for no set tenure. Still only 49, he hopes to plague the underworld for at least another ten years.

Tall, tanned and powerfully built, Millen is described as "a study in quiet confidence". Joining the Metropolitan Police in 1934 his progress has been fast. Murder investigations have taken him all over the country. He has served with the squad that investigates complicated City (ie., financial district) frauds, and has also served with the Flying Squad—as a Sergeant for three years and as a chief inspector in 1957. More recently he has been "Scotland Yard's" time-and-motion expert, working in research and planning, helping to clear away out-of-date or ineffective methods. Under his leadership, the Flying Squad will work closely with law enforcement forces throughout the country. He has often pointed out that crime is highly mobile in these days and that it must be fought in this fashion wherever it can be found. In other words, his men will be told, "Go anywhere, get results."



Do Unseen Powers Direct Our Lives?

ARE the tales of strange human powers false? Can the mysterious feats performed by the mystics of the Orient be explained away as only illusions? Is there an intangible bond with the universe beyond which draws mankind on? Does a mighty Cosmic intelligence from the reaches of space ebb and flow through the deep recesses of the mind, forming a river of wisdom which can carry men and women to the heights of personal achievement?

Have You Had These Experiences?

. . . that unmistakable feeling that you have taken the wrong course of action, that you have violated some inner, unexpressed, better judgement? The sudden realization that the silent whisperings of self are cautioning you to keep your own counsel—not to speak words on the tip of your tongue in the presence of another. That something which pushes you forward when you hesitate, or restrains you when you are apt to make a wrong move.

These urges are the subtle *influence* which when understood and directed has made thousands of men and women masters of their lives. There IS a source of intelligence within you as natural as your senses of sight and hearing, and more dependable, which you are NOT using now! Challenge this statement! Dare the Rosicrucians to reveal the functions of this Cosmic mind and its great possibilities to you.

Let This Free Book Explain

Take this infinite power into your partnership. You can use it in a rational and practical way without interference with your religious beliefs or personal affairs. The Rosicrucians, a world-wide philosophical movement, *invite you* to write today for your *Free* copy of the fascinating book, "The Mastery of Life" which explains further. Address your request to Scribe L.R.N.

The ROSICRUCIANS
(AMORC)
San Jose, California

the hard man

by . . . Richard Deming

He was sitting in the reception room, which I leave unlocked so visitors will have a place to wait until I come in or until they get tired of waiting and go away again. He had stacked the whole pile of magazines from the bookcase next to him on the sagging leather sofa and seemed to be going through them one at a time in the hope of finding one he hadn't already read. There wasn't much chance of him finding one new enough to have missed, but there was a good chance of him finding one printed before he learned to read. He was only about nineteen years old.

He was a tall, gangling, blond kid with a pink-cheeked Princeton look about him and a lot of money behind him. I could tell the last by his clothes, which were tailored to look ordinary. It's only the new rich who look rich. When the stuff has been in the family for generations, they think it's bad taste to make a display. So they lay out two hundred dollars a suit and tell their tailors to make them look like forty dollars. Why, I don't know.

I gave him a nod and crossed to the door lettered: *David Gannon*

Richard Deming is the author of THE CASE OF THE CRIME LORD (Pocket Books) and other novels. Here we are introduced to David Gannon, California Private Eye.

—*Investigations*. When I keyed it open, he lifted all the magazines back onto the shelves of the bookcase and followed me into the private office. I pointed to a chair on the side of the desk away from the window, fitted myself into my swivel chair and picked my Lion's Head pipe out of an ash tray on the desk. I looked at him while I packed it.

He licked his lips and said, "My mother doesn't know I'm here, Mr. Gannon."

I considered this, but there didn't seem to be any logical answer to it. I lit my pipe.

"In California, I mean," he expanded.

I said, "Where does she think you are?"

"Back at school. I was home for Easter vacation."

"What school?"

"I'm a freshman at Kansas State."

I'd guessed wrong. I make a lot of wrong guesses. But I still thought he looked like Princeton.

I said, "Where's home?"

"Topeka, Kansas."

He looked around the office to see what kind of housekeeper I am, noting the dust on the filing cabinets, the cobweb in one corner of the ceiling and the dirty fringes on the curtains. They get that way in warm weather because I keep the windows open in lieu of air conditioning.

I said, "I could pull it out of you a bit at a time. Next I could ask who's your mother, then who you are, then what you want. It'd be simpler if you just keep talking."

This turned on the faucet. His name was Theodore Hobart II, he told me, and his mother was Mrs. Theodore Hobart, Jr. He seemed to think I should recognize the name, but I didn't. I gathered that the Hobarts were a midwestern version of Boston's Cabots and Lodges, only with a higher social standing. While the Cabots spoke only to the Lodges and the Lodges spoke only to God, the Hobarts didn't feel obligated to speak to anybody. His father was dead, he was an only child, and as the last male Hobart he was expected by his mother to behave in a manner becoming the family name. This excluded his right to go overboard for just any girl he fancied. She had to meet his mother's approval.

At this point I expected him to confess that the girl of his dreams was a chorus floozie, but it wasn't that at all. She came from a fine but poor Kansas family, she had a degree in home economics from Kansas State and she attended the same church he and his mother did. As a matter of fact she had been the church's choir director up to a year ago, when she had moved to California. Her name was Martha Crockett.

I asked, "What's your mother's beef?"

"She has none. She doesn't even know how I feel about Martha."

I tried it another way. "What would her beef be if she knew about it?"

He took out a cigarette and shuffled it from hand to hand as though it were hot. He gazed out the window at the office building across the courtyard. He examined his feet to make sure he was wearing shoes. I held out a lighted match and he lit the filter end of his cigarette.

After he stopped coughing and had dumped the cigarette in an ash tray, he said diffidently, "She's a little older than I am."

I sucked on my pipe and waited.

"She's twenty-eight," he finally managed to get out. "But it isn't like what you think."

"All right," I told him.

"She doesn't know I love her, you see."

I nodded wisely.

"I wouldn't want her to know," he said earnestly. "It's not the kind of love where you want to take a woman in your arms. It's like Dante's love for Beatrice. Clean and pure and lustless."

I said, "Not many children come from marriages like that."

He frowned at me. "I never hope to marry her. I don't think of her that way. She's something to worship, not to roll in the hay. It doesn't even make me jealous to think that someday she'll marry another man. Petrarch's Laura was another man's wife, but it didn't make him worship her any less."

I sat smoking my pipe for a while, waiting for him to get to the point. So far it sounded as though he needed a dose of castor oil more than he needed a private detective.

"I want you to find her for me," he said.

I took my pipe out of my mouth. "She's missing?"

"Not exactly. She just doesn't write anybody at home any more. Her parents are dead, but she used to write friends. Including me. But gradually she wrote less and less, and finally stopped altogether. My last few letters came back stamped: *address unknown.*"

"How old are you?" I asked.

He flushed. "Nineteen."

I'd guessed right for a change. I took a pleased puff at my pipe.

"Don't worry about my being able to pay you," he said. "I have plenty of my own money. Dad fixed it so I wouldn't have to ask mother for nickels after I reached eighteen."

"What am I supposed to do when I find her?"

He gazed around some more before saying, "Just find out how she is and what she's doing. And her address of course. I don't want her to know I hired you. I'll make up some excuse for being here when I drop by to make a surprise visit."

My pipe was getting strong so

I knocked it out. "You flew all the way here from Kansas just to look at her?"

"Well, I figured it might start her writing again."

"You look in the phone book for her name?"

"Of course," he said. "It's not there. I went to her last address, too. 1514 Renfrew. But they don't know where she moved. She's been gone from there a month."

He told me more about Martha Crockett then. She had left Topeka a year ago to become a Hollywood star. For a while she had written friends, including Theodore Hobart II, about her progress. She enrolled in a drama school, she listed her name at casting offices, she was trying to get an agent. Once she thought she had a job as an extra in a mob scene, but it must have fallen through, because she didn't mention it in her later letters. Again she got a temporary filing job at one of the studios, where she would daily be seen by producers and directors. She thought about adopting a stage name and asked some of her Topeka friends for suggestions.

Gradually the letters became less and less frequent and each one dwelled less on her acting career prospects. About a month ago they stopped altogether, and letters addressed to her came back stamped: *address unknown.*

"I've been going crazy," the kid said. "I had to know if she was all right. So when Easter vacation ended, I flew down here instead of returning to school."

He had three snapshots of the girl: one in her choir robe, one in street clothes, one in a bathing suit on some beach. She was a good-looking blonde with a nice smile. I liked the third picture best, but it left me at a loss to understand why his love was so spiritual. She had a figure like an old-fashioned Pierce Arrow.

I told him I'd see what I could do and asked for his local address. He said he was staying in room 4 at the Hotel Carillon.

After he left I checked the phone book, just in case he hadn't looked closely. There were fifty-two Crocketts, but none of them were named Martha.

Fifteen-fourteen Renfrew was a rooming house. It was run by an old hag with a mustache and a complexion like a mohair sofa. She didn't know where Martha Crockett had moved and didn't care. But a five-dollar bill got me a little information. Martha had told her she was taking an acting job and was moving in with a girl friend named Sunshine. The landlady thought Sunshine was probably a first name rather than a surname.

I started the round of the talent agencies and studios. Nobody'd ever heard of Martha Crockett, but I finally ran into a Sunshine Wayne. She'd been listed with one

of the agencies for a while, but had never gotten any work. They hadn't heard from her for months. I got her last-known address, a rooming house in downtown Los Angeles.

Sunshine Wayne had moved from the rooming house, leaving a Hollywood forwarding address. She'd moved from there to Santa Monica, then to Beverly Hills, then back to Hollywood, leaving her new address each time. I finally caught up with her on Palm Street in Hollywood.

It was a pink stucco, one-story apartment house with a veranda running all the way around it, so that each of its twenty or so apartments had its own outside entrance. From the outside it looked like an expensive place to live. A card on one of the side doors listed Sunshine Wayne and Sandra Temple as tenants.

It was nearly evening by the time I got there, and I could see an interior light through a crack in the drawn drapes. Chimes played the first three notes of Beethoven's Fifth when I pushed a button.

A dark-eyed brunette in white shorts and a white halter answered the door. She was built along the same voluptuous lines as Martha Crockett's figure in the bathing-suit picture, but she didn't have Martha's face. Her flashing black eyes and a certain sultry tilt to her head labeled her part Mexican. A saucy grin suggested the other part might be Mick.

"Sunshine Wayne?" I asked.

"You guessed it," she said.

I showed her my card. Her grin faded and she looked a little wary.

"May I come in?" I asked.

After studying me for a minute, she shrugged. Stepping aside, she let me into a tastefully furnished front room. Inside the place looked as expensive as it did from the outside. On either side of the front room were bedroom doors, straight ahead a kitchenette.

On a cocktail table were laid out a bottle of Scotch, a bowl of ice, some soda and glasses. She caught me admiring it.

"Fix yourself a drink," she suggested. "I can't bear to watch a man die of thirst."

I mixed two, one for each of us, and settled in a chair. She tucked her feet beneath her on a sofa. It was good Scotch. So good I concentrated on it until my glass was empty.

"Did you just drop by for the refreshments?" she asked. "Or is something on your mind?"

I set the glass down. "I'm looking for Martha Crockett."

Something like the shutter of a camera flicked across her eyes. Suddenly the flash was gone from them and they became opaque. "Should I know her?"

I shrugged.

She studied me for a while. "I don't know her," she decided.

"Where's your apartment mate?" I inquired.

"Sandra? She's out at the moment."

I took out a cigarette and tapped it on my wrist a couple of times before putting it in my mouth. "Sunshine Wayne a stage name?"

"Uh-huh."

"How about Sandra Temple?"

She studied me again. "I wouldn't know."

I lit my cigarette, blew a thin stream of smoke toward her. "I'm not skip tracing, Sunshine. It's just a welfare report. Some of her friends back in Kansas are worried about her."

"I don't think Sandy has any friends in Kansas. I'll ask her, and if you leave your card, maybe she'll call you up."

"Sure," I said. I dropped the card I had shown her onto the cocktail table.

A phone in the corner rang.

"Excuse me," the girl said. She went to answer it. "Hello," she said into the phone.

There was a pause, then, "Eight thirty? In the lobby. Tall, dark suit. Okay, I'll be there."

When she hung up, she said, "I'll have to shoo you out so I can get dressed. That was casting. I have to get over to the studio."

"They shoot at night?" I asked.

"Retakes. In the TV business retakes are always at night. There's barely enough time days to shoot the regular sequences."

I punched out my cigarette and rose to my feet. "Mind if I use your phone book a minute?"

"Be my guest," she said. "You can let yourself out. I've got to duck under a shower." She disappeared into one of the bedrooms.

I riffled the phone book to the W-section. No Sunshine Wayne was listed. I tried the T-section. There was no Sandra Temple either.

Of course it was possible the girls hadn't lived there long enough to get in the book. I glanced at the bedroom door. It was closed. Lifting the phone, I dialed information.

"Can you give me the phone number of either Miss Sunshine Wayne or Miss Sandra Temple on Palm Street?" I requested.

After a moment the operator said, "I'm sorry, sir. I have no such phone listed."

That's the way the telephone company phrases it. They don't like to lie. They don't say there's no phone; they just say it isn't listed.

The girls had an unlisted phone, just like the big stars.

I took another drink of the Scotch, straight this time, and let myself out.

A girl came walking along the side porch from the direction of the street. There were small lights imbedded in the porch roof at intervals, so it was well illuminated. I gave her a casual glance as we passed each other.

She was a well-formed redhead in a green sheath dress that had probably cost as much as Theodore Hobart II's plane fare from Kansas. The red hair looked natural, but I knew it wasn't. Because the face was the same as the one in the snapshots of Martha Crockett.

When the girl had entered the apartment I just left, I walked back and laid my ear to the door. I heard the brunette call from the bedroom, "That you, Sandy?"

I couldn't catch the redhead's reply, but then Sunshine called, "Some shamus was just here looking for you, honey. But you'd better call Jimmy before I tell you about it. He's got something lined up for you."

After a moment I heard the phone being dialed, but I couldn't hear the conversation through the door. I walked back along the side porch to the street, climbed into my car and went home.

I mixed a drink before I phoned the Carillon. I was out of Scotch, and the rye tasted like wood alcohol on top of Sunshine's Scotch. But it was better than going thirsty.

When I got Theodore Hobart II on the phone, he asked eagerly, "You learn anything, Mr. Gannon?"

"Yeah," I said. "You may as well go home."

"Why?" he asked in an anxious voice. "She's not dead, is she?"

"Just married," I said. "An engineer named Howard Potts. They moved to South America."

Silence accumulated on the other end. Finally he said in a hurt tone, "You're sure?"

"Uh-huh."

"She might have written me about it. Do you have her South American address?"

"No. Why do you need it? To send a wedding present?"

There was some more silence. Then he said quietly, "I guess I don't need it. I'll be taking off tomorrow. Want to stop by for your check?"

"Okay. What time you leaving?"

"The best flight is at ten P.M.," he said. "I'll be here until at least eight thirty."

"See you at eight," I told him. "How you getting to the airport?"

"I rented a car," he said. " I can turn it in there."

Hard man Gannon, I thought disgustedly when I hung up. It wasn't enough for me to nursemaid the kid. I had even been going to offer to drive him to the airport.

It was nearly eight thirty by then, and I hadn't eaten since noon. I went out to grab some dinner, then spent the rest of the evening at Jimmy Devon's tavern just across the street from where I live. I helped Jimmy close up at two in the morning.

I never got to my office the next morning. As I stepped out of my apartment, two men were coming

toward me from the direction of the elevator. One was a big, sweaty guy with the coldest grin I ever saw. The other was a slim, sharply dressed Mexican. Even before they flashed their wallets, I smelled cop.

"March of Homicide," the big guy said. "This is my partner, Rivierez. You're David Gannon?"

I admitted I was.

"Let's take a ride," March said.

They took me down to the Hall of Justice and to a small room in the basement. One wall of the room was glass with draw drapes over it. March drew back the drapes.

She lay on her back the other side of the viewing window, stark naked. Her figure was even lovlier than it had been in a bathing suit. But her face was a horror. It was puffed and purple, and her eyes bugged out as though they were going to burst.

I took out a handkerchief and wiped the back of my neck. "Strangled?"

"Uh-huh," March said. "We found her like that in a ditch alongside one of the canyon roads. Naked as a jay-bird." He grinned his cold grin.

"Am I supposed to know her?" I asked.

Rivierez said softly, "You tell us."

I shook my head. "Sorry."

"We got a make on her," March said. "She applied for a job in an airplane plant a while back. She didn't get the job, but it was a security deal and all the applicants had to be fingerprinted. So we had it easy. She's been going under the name Sandra Temple. A TV actress, her girl friend says. But her real name is Martha Crockett."

"Oh," I said.

"We followed the same trail you did, starting with the rooming house on Renfrew. We kept wondering who the guy was ahead of us. We found out when we hit Palm Street. Nice of you to leave your card."

"I try to be helpful," I said.

I wiped the back of my neck again and put the handkerchief away. March grinned and sweated at me. Rivierez stared at my left ear.

"It was just a welfare report," I said. "Some friends in Topeka, Kansas were worried about her."

"What friends?"

"They wouldn't be important. They're still in Topeka. We dealt by mail."

Rivierez said, "How come you pretended not to know her?"

"I didn't see her last night. Just her apartment mate. All I had was a picture. She doesn't look like it now."

Rivierez said, "Can you account for your movements last night?"

"Uh-huh,"

"Start accounting for them," March suggested.

I told them where I'd been. They drove me back to the tavern, where

Jimmy Devon swore I had been from nine thirty P.M. until two A.M.

March said, "I guess you're clear, Gannon. She was found about two A.M. The M.E. says she died about eleven." He looked disappointed.

When the cops walked out, I told Jimmy to give me a double Scotch.

I kicked away what was left of the day in the office. Nobody came in. Every now and then I took a break from doing nothing to go across the street to a bar. At five I locked the inner door and went home.

When I keyed open my apartment door, I found I had company. A lank, drawn-out man with a sad face was seated in my best chair. A little character with a thin nose and a pointed chin had his feet on the sofa. Both of them had guns in their hands.

I closed the door behind me and waited. The lanky man unfolded himself a section at a time. He opened up like a telescope until he was at least six feet eight. He was built like a telescope, too. I don't think he weighed over a hundred and sixty pounds.

He came over and gently tilted my chin skyward with his gun muzzle. I felt a hand dip under my arm. He tossed my gun to his little partner, who expertly plucked it from the air and stuffed it down the crack of the sofa.

The little man swung his feet to the floor and bounced erect like a rubber ball. Both men put their guns in their pockets, but kept me covered through the cloth.

"After you," the tall man said.

We went outside and got into a gray Buick, me in the back with the tall man, the little guy under the wheel. The tall man kept his gun in his lap, pointed at me. Nobody said anything.

When we had driven for about fifteen minutes in the general direction of Beverly Hills, I asked, "Why the snatch?"

The tall man just looked at me sadly.

"Can I smoke?"

He gave me a nod. He was about as communicative as Calvin Coolidge.

I got out a cigarette, keeping my movements slow. The man's sad eyes watched me as I lit up.

"Want one?" I asked.

He shook his head. I gave up all attempt at conversation.

We hit Wilshire Boulevard, kept on it nearly to Santa Monica, suddenly turned off on a side street. We passed some big homes with beautiful lawns and wide, curved driveways. A mile from Wilshire we swung into one of the driveways and drove into a garage attached to a brick and stone mansion.

The tall man backed from the car and motioned me out the same side with his gun. I dropped my cigarette to the concrete floor and

carefully stepped on it. After drawing his gun, in case the sad-faced man's wasn't enough to cow me, the little guy opened a door from the garage into the kicthen. I followed him, the tall man trailing after us.

We went from the kitchen into a hall, across a dining room to an elaborately furnished front room big enough to sport a full-sized grand piano in one corner, across it and ended up on a sun porch at the side of the house. A fat blob of a man wearing nothing but Bermuda shorts and beach sandals sat in a deck chair with a drink in his hand. Except for the top of his head, he was so hairy he looked as though he had on a fur suit. The only hair on his head was a scant fringe around the sides and two puffs of black wool growing from his ears.

Lounging in a chair next to him, wearing a red sun dress and holding a drink, was Sunshine Wayne.

The fat man looked me up and down. "This the guy?" he asked the girl.

"It's him," she said indifferently. She took a sip of her drink.

"Know who I am?" the fat man asked me.

"Jimmy Regna," I told him.

"Then you know my reputation."

"Yeah," I said. "I wouldn't want it."

His fat face creased in a frown, nearly burying his eyes in rolls of suet. "Don't crack wise, Gannon. I mean my reputation for taking care of my own."

"Uh-huh. You don't like anybody to rub out your people unless you give the word yourself."

He took a gulp of his drink and set the glass on the floor next to him. "Yesterday you were nosing around about my girl Sandra. Today she's dead. Why?"

"Why's she dead? Somebody strangled her."

He looked irritated. He glanced at the tall, sad-faced man. Sad-face stepped around in front of me and casually slapped my face with the hand that didn't have a gun in it. It hurt, even though I rolled with the slap. His fingers were all bone.

"I'll ask you again," Regna said. "Why were you nosing around?"

I took out my handkerchief and wiped the back of my neck. "I told Sunshine. Some friends back in Topeka, Kansas wanted a welfare report."

"What friends?"

"You wouldn't know them. They're nice people."

Sad-face slapped me again, this time backhand. The backs of his fingers were bonier than the fronts.

I said, "Listen, Regna, the cops have already cleared me. I was leaning on the bar near where I live last night till two A.M."

"A smart shamus like you wouldn't have no trouble rigging an alibi. Why'd you kill her?"

I looked at Sunshine, who gave me a meaningless smile and took a

sip of her drink. I looked at the little, pointed-chinned man, who was scratching his ear with the sight of his gun. I looked at sad-face, who rolled his bony fist into a ball.

Regna said, "You ask him, Skyscraper."

The sad-faced Skyscraper showed me his fist. It wasn't big, but the knobby knuckles looked hard enough to cut. I got tired of the whole setup. I hit him on the jaw so hard, he staggered across the sun porch and took a pair of French doors out in the yard with him to the accompaniment of rending wood and shattering glass.

I closed the two-step gap between me and the little guy while he was getting his gun out of his ear. I hit him with the other fist, driving him back into the front room in a face-up position. He landed on his back on a scatter rug and rode it across the tiled floor like a sled until his head acted as a bumper against the leg of the grand piano.

All four of Jimmy Regna's chins were quivering when I used both hands to jerk him erect by the front of his natural fur jacket. I gave him a shove and he staggered backward through the remains of the French doors and sat on a piece of broken glass. I don't know whether that brought the howl from him, or the fact that I hadn't opened my hands when I shoved him.

I opened them now, scattering enough chest hair on the porch floor to stuff a small doll. I looked down at Sunshine. She gazed back at me thoughtfully.

"I told him I didn't think you did it," she said. "You didn't seem the type. But you know how Jimmy is. Some people you can't tell anything."

"Yeah," I said. "Especially pimps."

I went back into the front room. The car keys were in the little guy's coat pocket. I crossed back through the dining room, the hall, through the kitchen into the garage. When I backed down the driveway, Skyscraper was still stretched out on the side lawn. Regna was standing, but bent over, and Sunshine was interestedly examining the seat of his pants, which were dripping with blood.

I left the car in the middle of the street on Sunset Boulevard, a block and a half from my apartment house, and tossed the keys down a sewer. I thought having it towed away by the cops, paying a towing charge, and possibly paying a fine for obstructing traffic, might do Jimmy Regna's soul good.

It was just eight P.M. when I arrived at the Hotel Carillon. On Pecos, it's a neat, modern, eight-story building of tan brick with a fountain in front on which they play a spotlight of changing colors in the evening. Number four was

a rear room on the first floor with windows giving onto a courtyard out back.

Theodore Hobart II had his suitcase all packed and lying on the bed when I got there. He greeted me without much enthusiasm and asked in a kind of cold tone how much he owed me.

"There was a five-dollar expense," I said. "Plus a full day's work. Fifty-five."

He stared at me. "Isn't that a little steep for nothing?"

"It's my rate, kid. And what do you mean, for nothing?"

"I think you made that story up. I don't think you did a damn thing."

I took out a cigarette and tapped it on the back of my wrist. I stuck it in my mouth, found a match and lit it. Carefully I laid the match on a dresser ash tray.

"Why do you think that?"

"It just sounded fishy."

I walked over to look out the windows into the rear courtyard. There wasn't any fountain with a colored light playing on it there, as there was out front. It was dark and the courtyard was edged by an alley. Nobody would be likely to see you if you stepped through the window and carried something to a car parked in the alley.

I opened the closet, looked in, then started checking the empty dresser drawers.

"What do you think you're doing?" he asked.

"Looking for her clothes," I said. "They, weren't on her."

He turned a little pale. "What are you talking about?"

"If you hadn't turned cheap, I would never have suspected it," I said. "I was trying to preserve your illusions by telling you she was married. You couldn't have found out it was a lie unless you knew the real truth."

I started to open the suitcase. He made a rush for me and I stiff-armed him away. He grabbed for the dresser top to keep from falling, stayed there hanging onto it like a drowning man clinging to a rock.

I got the suitcase open. His stuff was on top. From beneath some shirts I drew out a pair of women's shoes. There was a brassiere, a garter belt, a pair of nylon stockings, a sheer nylon slip, some black lace panties. Neatly folded on the bottom of the suitcase was something green. I held it up. It was a sheath dress.

"Why'd you strip her?" I asked. "Did you have to find out if she was built as wonderfully as you imagined?"

He didn't say anything.

"You figured on disposing of the clothes back in Kansas, huh? Or were you going to keep them under your pillow to remember her by?"

He closed his eyes and opened them again.

"I guess your spiritual worship

of womanhood was just for her," I said. "You didn't mind rolling in the hay with a call girl."

He licked his lips. Still clinging to the dresser top, he whispered, "I've got money. I'll pay whatever you want."

I shook my head. "You don't even have to pay my fee. I figured it was worth it for the favor I was doing you. But your illusions are shattered anyway. You could make a fortune at Las Vegas."

He stared at me. "What?"

"There must be at least a thousand call girls in this town. So the odds were a thousand-to-one against Jimmy Regna, the local king of the pimps, sending this particular one out on this particular date. But you bingoed. Did you have to kill her?"

He let go of the dresser and slid down the wall to a seated position on the floor. His mouth sagged open and sweat dripped from the end of his nose.

"She had no right," he said dully. "After the way I worshipped her, she had no right." He looked up at me and his face twisted with inward agony. Suddenly he screamed, "She was a common whore! She had no right to be a common whore!"

"She had a right to live, though."

I crossed over to the phone and dialed the police.

IRMA LA DOUCE IN TROUBLE AGAIN!

Three police forces and two London firms of private detectives were working night and day, recently, trying to find out who had done wrong to Irma la Douce.

The inquiry concerned the filly Irma la Douce, to be exact, who started a strong favorite at 11-8 in a £1,000 handicap in May, and finished last of seven runners. Veterinary tests showed that the filly had been treated in some way with a slowing-down drug; a reward has been offered by the owner for information leading to a conviction.

There has, it seems, been an increase this Spring of serious doping incidents despite stringent security precautions by trainers and owners. Caffeine is described as the drug most commonly used to speed up a racehorse. The slowing drugs are several, and harder to identify.

Some unkind souls have suggested that overseas know-how has contributed to the unprecedented spurt in these incidents. More recent acts of violence, including the shooting and killing of policemen, have revived this speculation.

death at winchona

by . . . Lawrence G. Blochman

EVEN before the fruit steamer carrying Holloway across the Caribbean had deposited him at Puerto Justo, Travis decidedly disliked this youth he had never seen. He intimated as much when the district superintendent told him he was sending an American assistant to Winchona Farm.

"I don't need no timekeeper to grow bananas on Winchona," Travis had said. "Particularly the kind of timekeepers they send down these days. Still, what can a guy expect with banana growin' gettin' to be as excitin' as growin' pansies. I suppose you'll give me a college boy with a gold baseball hangin' on his watch chain and ten times more ideas than guts."

Several weeks of brooding augmented Travis's dislike to the point of a personal antagonism by the time the district superintendent's gasoline car sputtered through the bananas on the fruit company railway, to stop in front of the overseer's bungalow. As the superintendent and the new timekeeper hopped off, Travis remained sitting on the veranda, smoking a long

Lawrence G. Blochman, veteran newspaperman and former National President of the Mystery Writers of America, writes with equal authoritativeness of the South of France, of India or Korea (as there should be no need to remind readers of this magazine), and here describes life in a Central American republic in the days when the Banana was *King. . . .*

Originally published as BLOW-DOWN in the March 1, 1932 issue of *Adventure*
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Reprinted by arrangement with the author.

black *puro*. It was nearly dark, but Travis could see that Holloway was of medium height, a well built, rather awkward chap with a slicker over his arm. He was young, but not quite so young as Travis had imagined.

Holloway ambled up the steps and through the double screen doors. When the superintendent made the presentations he grinned with some very white teeth, stuck out a big but by no means calloused hand, and said—

"Damned glad to know you, sir."

He didn't say "suh", but he showed more than a trace of Southern accent.

Travis shook the hand briefly, grunted something in reply, puffed out great clouds of smoke for a moment, then bellowed for his houseboy—

"José!"

José had long eyelashes and wore a hairnet to keep his glossy black hair properly sleeked back. When he appeared, Travis said—

"José, get the hell out there and *traiga* the baggage *de este señor*."

Holloway turned to the boy and augmented the instructions in slightly stilted but correct Spanish, nicely pronounced despite his Southern accent showing through. Whereupon Travis hated his new assistant a little more. He could not stand these kids showing up with their Spanish all polished and ready to use. Travis, despite some thirty years in Latin-America, still spoke a jargon that was seldom more than seventy-five per cent Spanish, and usually included an ample leaven of undiluted American profanity.

As soon as the superintendent had gone back to district headquarters, some ten miles away, Travis opened up on Holloway.

"Why in hell did you come to a spot like this?" he demanded.

"This is much better than I expected," said Holloway.

"Wait till you've been here awhile," said Travis gloomily. "If you stay, of course. I doubt if you'll be able to stick the climate."

"Almost as hot here as it is at my home near New Orleans." Holloway grinned, and mopped his brow.

"Damn unhealthy climate. You takin' your quinine regular? No? Then I'd better get you some right away," said Travis, going after a supply he kept for distribution among his laborers.

He never used it himself. American overseers rarely did. Screens and the spraying gangs kept the anopheles mosquito and malaria far in the background.

When Holloway did not seem greatly impressed by his quinine speech, Travis went one better.

"Before it's too late, I'll show you where the snake bite shots are," said Travis solemnly.

He led the way to the icebox and brought out the kits of anti-venom

serums with an air of alarming mystery. He wanted to convey the impression that these serums were rushed into use daily. Actually, he had never had a case of snake bite since he had been overseer at Winchona.

"What do you have most of here?" asked Holloway with great interest. "Coral snake or fer-de-lance?"

Travis slammed the icebox door and muttered—

"Both."

This damn kid wasn't twenty-four hours in the country, and he knew all about the snakes already. Got it out of books, of course . . .

"Well, you can see what a lousy life you're in for," said Travis.

"I think I'm going to like it," said Holloway.

"It don't lead nowhere," said Travis dismally. "Bananas is no future for a youngster like you. Where'll you be when you're fifty? Well, I'm past fifty. Take a look at me!"

It was when Travis took a look at himself that he disliked his new timekeeper the most.

Holloway represented a force of which Travis stood in some bewilderment and subliminal fear. Holloway personified the tide of efficient youth that was sweeping the last of Travis's kind out of the Caribbean.

Travis was a relic of the days before fruit company sanitation gangs had cleaned up miasmic swamps and company engineers had pushed telephone lines through the jungle. He had first worked for the fruit company when the great, monotonous sea of banana plantation, that stretches seventy miles away from the coast, had barely begun to eat into the cliffs of virgin jungle. In those days men like Travis were eagerly hired because, being in a more or less constant alcoholic haze, they were oblivious of the mosquitos and other bodily discomforts. The amount of alcohol in their systems was considered prophylactic against malaria—the idea of screening houses having not yet blessed the tropics. And they never stayed at any job long.

Travis himself had been employed by the fruit company on seven separate occasions over a period of nearly thirty years. He had helped build three railroads. He had cleared jungle in Guatemala and planted bananas in Honduras. For awhile he ran drag-line crews in Colombia. Between times he might be bossing a gang of *chicleros* for some chewing gum outfit in British Honduras, or dabbling in revolution in Nacaragua, or coffee in Costa Rica.

But things had been getting more difficult for a footloose and carefree body in the Caribbean. Efficiency had raised its severe head among the bananas. The men Travis used to know were nearly all gone. Some had gone back to the

States; some had settled down with plump Guatemaltecas to run cafés in Guatemala City; some had died off quietly and in bed. Their places were being taken by young men, fresh from college, many of them, who seemed to relish the increasing complexity of getting bananas to the United States. The precision and coordination of cutting just the required amount of just the proper grade of fruit and rushing it aboard a ship fifty miles away, all in a few hours, was a little bewildering in contrast to the leisurely plantation life of Travis's youth. But Travis had decided he would try to like it.

Travis had come back to the fruit company this last time a little less than a year before Holloway's arrival. He had come back with something of the same attitude of a repentant sinner entering a church. A mirror had shown him that his hair was getting pretty thin and gray, that his neck was beginning to wrinkle like a turtle's, and that tiny purple veins were subdividing the bulbous end of his turned-up nose as thoroughly as the cracks in Satsuma porcelain. He began to feel a vague need for salvation and security, and drifted into division headquarters of the fruit company at Platanera.

It was Travis's luck that the division manager had known him some twenty-five years previous, when they were both timekeepers near San Pedro Sula, and he knew Travis, when sober, could grow bananas. It was Travis's further luck that the division manager was feeling in a particularly reminiscent and tenderly generous mood the day he appeared seeking a job, because Travis was given a farm and the admonition that this was to be "absolutely the last chance."

The first month that Travis was overseer at Winchona, the river backed up into the drainage ditches. Travis distinguished himself patching the levees, and saved most of his farm. Since then, in the less sensational routine, he was inclined to be a little negligent. However, he kept unusually sober—for Travis—and his superiors decided that with a timekeeper to look after the details he let slide, Travis might prove the exception to the rule about rolling stones. They sent him Holloway.

When Holloway arrived, Travis had thought up a dozen items for his education, varying from mere annoyance to turns which might possibly lead to getting rid of the youth. One of the choice items of the curriculum was Mercedes.

Mercedes was an American mule, recently arrived from the States. Most of the mules on Caribbean banana farms are native bred, because they are cheaper and less temperamental than their American cousins. However, the native animals are too small for pulling a tram loaded with bananas or packing an overseer on a tour of

inspection; hence the American importations. The American mules are not happy during their first weeks in the tropics. They are usually half wild to begin with. They are a little puzzled by the climate and strange surroundings. Then they are greatly dissatisfied with their tropical diet.

Mules in the States eat hay and oats. Mules on the shores of the Caribbean find epicurean delight in bunches of green bananas rejected at loading as bruised, undersized, or too nearly ripe to travel. Newly arrived American mules for many hungry weeks look disdainfully not only upon green bananas but upon mules so undiscriminating as to eat green bananas. Eventually, the expatriates bury their mulish pride and go native; but during the transitional period they are extremely difficult. Mercedes had undergone a long spell of proud hunger when Travis presented her to Holloway.

"This is Mercedes," said Travis one afternoon, as the mule boy brought two animals from the corral. "She'll be your private ridin' mule. Climb aboard. We're goin' on across the farm." Travis led the way down the tracks. "We can't get back too late. The district superintendent says he'll be over right after supper. He wants to talk to you."

Travis turned off the railway tracks, followed a tram line for a mile, then plunged his mule deep into the bananas. Holloway, riding Mercedes, trailed him down a Gothic colonnade of broad leaves, across a drainage ditch, into another thickly grown aisle.

Mercedes would turn around and start in the opposite direction at the slightest provocation. When Holloway reined in, she kicked up a fuss, reared and backed, finally galloping heavy footed through puddles of muddy water. She would hurdle stumps and rotting logs, remnants of the fallen jungle. veer off, rush close to the banana trees in an effort to scrape her rider off, ignoring, in her temperate zone manner, the frailty of the banana stalk.

Once she sank above her knee joints in black mud. Holloway had to get off and lead her out. By the time he had managed to mount again, Travis had disappeared. The profusion of foliage limited visibility to about fifty feet in any direction. The sameness of the outlook on all sides confused Holloway. He was surrounded by a ring of yellow-green stalks, a world of leaves—curled leaves of the sucker plants, unfurled leaves, tattered leaves like battle flags, some sere drooping leaves. He shouted. Travis returned, handing out a few tart remarks about handling mules.

After an hour's riding, in which period Holloway was lost four times, Travis stopped at a drainage ditch and pointed to the other side.

"You go through that section

over there," he said, "and see what English fruit there is for next week."

He looked down at a wooden foot bridge. One plank was missing and another badly splintered.

"Hullo," he commented. "This ain't in no condition to be crossed by a mule that's been actin' like Mercedes. I'd tie her up and run over on foot."

Holloway dismounted, unwound a rope halter and made it fast to a banana tree. He picked his way gingerly over the weakened bridge, stepped in mud up to his boot tops, then started down a green cloister of banana leaves. Travis saw him making annoyed gestures as mosquitos flew up from the undergrowth, whining aggressively.

When Holloway had disappeared, Travis rode over to the tree to which Mercedes was tied. He drew his machete from the scabbard dangling from his saddle. Then, leaning over the neck of his mule, he cut a deep nick through the concentric sheaths that made the trunk. Smiling to himself, he put away his machete. Suddenly he sank his spurs into the flanks of his mule. The mule leaped forward with a surprised snort, then broke into a gallop.

The snort and the sound of the gallop disturbed the reverie of Mercedes, who had been standing in silence, doubtless brooding over the humiliation of being expected to eat green bananas. Mercedes started up after her companion. The unsubstantial false trunk of the banana tree bent, then gave way where Travis's machete had nicked it. The great cluster of broad leaves swishing behind her completed Mercedes' panic. She was off.

Some five hours later Holloway walked wearily up the steps to the veranda. He was covered with mud and soaked with perspiration.

Travis was sitting in the darkness, smoking a *puro*. He was bare to the waist, and wore only a pair of bright red trousers that he claimed some Indian had given to him in Campeche. He surveyed the bedraggled and mud spattered Holloway without a flicker of expression.

"The district superintendent gone?" asked Holloway.

Travis grunted.

"The superintendent's got better things to do than wait on the greenest timekeeper in the division," he said.

"Any supper left?" asked Holloway.

"This ain't no all-night lunch wagon," said Travis. "Supper's at quarter to six. Where you been all this time?"

"My mule ran away," was the reply. "I've been walking. I got lost."

Travis made peculiar noises with his palate and nasal sinuses. They may have been sounds of pleasure,

but they probably denoted scorn and derision.

"Lost?" he exclaimed incredulously. "Lost—on your own *finca?*"

"It was dark," explained Holloway. "I couldn't make out the section numbers, and my matches got wet in the rain. I finally hit a tram line, but I followed it in the wrong direction and wound up on the edge of the jungle."

"A good banana herder don't need no section numbers," said Travis. "He knows where he is by the height of the bananas, by the way buds are shootin'. And a good banana herder knows that a banana plant ain't no Rock of Gibraltar for no mule. I could have told you that this afternoon, but I thought you'd remember better if you learned by yourself."

Holloway found a dry cigaret on the table and lighted it. He smiled a little wearily.

"Thanks for the lesson," he said.

"Don't forget you got to make that river pick-up tonight," reminded Travis. "The launch stops back of the bungalow in three hours. If you're figurin' on takin' a nap in the meantime, be damned sure you don't oversleep."

Holloway smiled. The way he smiled at the indignities that Travis invented in the ensuing weeks, as though he considered the malicious little tricks legitimate hazing any green timekeeper might expect, only infuriated Travis further. He watched sullenly while Holloway found out he liked his job.

Holloway got on well with the peons working for him. He even got on with Mercedes, when that refractory mule had assumed her tropical personality under his tutelage. He induced her to taste a ripe banana, properly peeled; then he fed her ripe bananas unpeeled, then a green banana—and Mercedes was his. He fitted her out with a fancy saddle. He got himself an *acapulco*—a long, Mexican machete—and carried it in a fine scabbard of tooled leather that dangled ostentatiously from the pommel of his saddle. He wore a broad-brimmed Stetson hat. Then, one day after all his white shirts bore the brown stains of banana sap that marked him as a veteran, he rode the farm with a six-shooter on his hip and a few octaves of cartridges around his belt.

Travis had a mild attack of hysterics when he saw him. It was a full minute before he recovered power of speech.

"Mad-ree dee Dee-ohs!" exclaimed Travis in what he imagined was Spanish. "Where do you think you are—back in the States? You don't have to pack all that artillery down here, youngster."

Holloway laughed and said something about wanting to shoot a *tepeiscuinte* for dinner, if he got a good shot at one. He rode off, whistling the opening bars of "The Stars and Stripes Forever".

Several days later Travis came upon Wellington, Jamaica negro foreman of Winchona Farm's labor, whistling the opening bars of "The Stars and Stripes Forever". Somehow, Travis regarded this as a definite sign of Holloway's imminent ascendancy. And an omen of his own decline appeared the same day.

The second omen was a tattered, gray-haired American whom Travis had known off and on for fifteen years. The man in tatters said he had just stopped off at the farm on his way to San Pedro Sula. He was walking to British Honduras, he said. There was some talk of a gold strike on the Belize River.

He had lost his job in San Pedro Sula. All he had done was go on a bat for four days. In the old days a man could go on a bat for a week or so, and nobody thought anything of it; now they were picking on puny and ridiculous little excuses like a four-day drunk to get rid of a man, so they could put a boy in his place. They were giving all the jobs to boys nowadays.

Travis gave the tattered American a meal, a bottle and two banknotes, but he did not offer a night's lodging. He sent him on his way to Puerto Justo, whence he could continue his journey toward the gold strike on the Belize River. To have him under his roof would have been painful to Travis, for the man in tatters was at once a ghost of the past and a prophet of the future. Travis was now sure that Holloway would get his job. Holloway was getting to know pretty much about banana culture. He was young, and he was efficient. They wanted young men, did they? Well . . .

Travis was sitting on the veranda, clad in his red trousers, the night he had sent the ghost on his way. He saw himself as champion of his kind in the eternal struggle of age against usurping youth. He would have to get rid of Holloway; there was no alternative now. He would —Travis sat up straight. He had just had a thought that startled him. He poured himself another drink, and examined the idea again. Then, as though prompted by the guardian angel of gray-haired men, Holloway himself restated the idea in slightly different words and without realizing its import. This time it startled Travis less.

"Mr. Travis," said Holloway, "I think we ought to fire Malero."

Malero! Something clicked inside Travis at mention of the name of Malero. A strange warmth suffused his being. Holloway was playing right into his hand, and Travis could not even be blamed. Was it Travis's fault that Malero was a vindictive person?

"What's the matter with Malero?" demanded Travis, and immediately wondered if he had sounded too gruff.

"He's the one that's been selling

aguardiente to our *mozos,*" said Holloway.

Aguardiente, illicit white sugar-cane rum, is a disruptive force in the banana labor camps. The company's commissaries sell only beer.

"You got proofs that Malero's been sellin' white-eye?"

"Don't need proofs," said Holloway. "There are plenty of other reasons to fire him. He hasn't cut a stem of fruit for three days, and he's been tight as a tick. He's about ready for a row over some woman. I think we ought to get rid of him before the thing breaks."

"Well—" Travis appeared to be hesitating, although he knew exactly what he was going to answer.

He himself would hesitate to fire Malero. He had let Malero pretty much alone. So had Wellington. They both accepted Malero's unofficial lordship over the hundred *mozos* in the labor camp.

Malero was a dark, lithe and well-muscled Nicaraguan who was generally believed to have come across the border in a hurry and about two jumps ahead of the agents of justice. Travis had overlooked his possible lapses in the past, because, aside from his sporadic periods of drunken idleness, he was a perfect worker.

He was not afraid to dispense energy. He could clear jungle with amazing ease and rapidity. He could wield a machete more effectively than any one in the division, either in the bananas, in the *monte* or in a fight. It was popularly supposed that he had used his machete on fellow-workers on at least two occasions; but as there was no witness to any of the choppings—the labor camp looking upon such matters as strictly between friends—the *comandancia* had ordered the corpses buried without making an arrest. And when the constituted authorities of the country are satisfied, why should Travis be otherwise in the matter of Malero? But now he suddenly took an entirely new view of the Nicaraguan.

"In that case, youngster," said Travis, "maybe we'd better fire the brute in the morning. Your Spanish is a little better than mine, so you go ahead and fire Malero."

"I sure will," said Holloway. "First thing in the morning."

Travis was greatly pleased with the turn events had taken. The fact that Holloway himself had suggested firing Malero seemed definitely to absolve Travis from blame attaching to any reaction Malero might show. Of course, there would be a reaction. These people almost always reacted when you fired them. If they happened to be a little spiffed, the more interesting the reaction was likely to be.

Travis remembered having fired a cook once for being drunk. It wasn't her being drunk that he minded, but her frying the potatoes in kerosene. When he told her she was through, she came back at him with a pair of scissors. And

if a mere woman cook attacked a *mandador* with a pair of scissors on being fired, what might not be expected of Malero, the Nicaraguan bad man?

Next morning over the breakfast table, the arrangement didn't seem quite so meritorious to Travis. Somehow this Holloway boy suddenly became very human as he sat there, dipping his toast in his coffee. Heretofore he had been only a symbol—a symbol of youth displacing age; and he was still that, of course. He was going to get Travis's job . . .

"Have a *puro*," said Travis, handing Holloway one of his country made cheroots.

Holloway was a trifle surprised; this was the first time Travis had ever offered to share a smoke with him. He accepted.

"Thanks," he said. He removed the revenue stamp from the end of the cigar and lighted it. He puffed a moment in silence, then pushed back his chair. "I'd better start if I want to catch Malero," he said.

Travis looked at his watch and turned to Holloway.

"Ten to six," he commented. "Malero's probably out already. He ought to be on Section 22."

"I'd like to catch him before he gets away from the camp," said Holloway, standing up.

Travis followed him to the veranda. The mule boy was waiting with the two animals outside the hibiscus hedge. As Holloway closed the second screen door behind him and went down the steps, Travis opened his mouth to say something—but the words never issued.

He watched the timekeeper spring astride Mercedes and ride down the tracks. Then he went inside and poured himself a stiff drink.

He didn't feel the drink at all. It was like water. He walked into the kitchen and swore at the cook because the coffee that morning was watery. He looked at his watch. Six o'clock. Holloway must have reached the labor camp by now. There was a phone in the foreman's shack. In case he should decide not to have Malero fired after all, he could reach Holloway through Wellington's phone. He walked to the veranda and stood a moment, watching a cloud of yellow and white butterflies whirl above the path, flickering in the sunlight. He went in and took up the phone. There were voices in the receiver. What could you expect when there were twenty phones on one line?

When he had a clear line, Travis twisted the crank for three short rings. A woman's voice answered. It was the foreman's wife. Wellington had gone already. The timekeeper? She hadn't seen him. Wait, she would look . . . Yes, Mr. Holloway was just going up the steps of the quarters next door. Yes, she would call him to the phone.

"Seen Malero yet?" asked Travis anxiously, when Holloway came to the instrument.

"Not yet. He finally decided to go to work this morning and he's out with a cutting gang. I'm sending for him to come in."

The sound of Holloway's voice calmed Travis. It was the young, confident, efficient voice that Travis hated.

"O. K.," said Travis. "Don't let him talk back to you."

He hung up. Taking his battered felt hat, roughly triangular in shape because of the way the two sides of the brim curled toward each other in front, he went out to his mule. He intended to make a leisurely inspection of the fruit being cut along the river, but he found himself urging his mule toward Section 22, where Malero would be at work. Riding along the tram line that served 22, he stopped to talk to a backer who was stacking stems of bananas. The backer said that Malero had passed on his way to the camp about fifteen minutes before. Travis turned his mule around and dug his heels into the animal's flanks until it broke into a reluctant trot.

When he came in sight of the long line of neat yellow buildings that housed the labor of Winchona, Travis saw a circle of excited men and women gathered about something near the rainwater tank. He rode nearly to the edge of the crowd, then dismounted. He noticed that the grass at his feet was beaded with fresh drops of crimson. Handing the reins to a boy, he pushed his way through the crowd.

Standing in the center of the circle, holding out his right hand while the wife of the foreman poured iodine over his knuckles, was Holloway. He was smiling and unruffled. Travis was puzzled.

"Where's Malero?" he asked.

Holloway looked up.

"Malero's gone," he said. "I fired him."

"And he took it—without a kick?"

"Oh, he kicked, all right. He was even a little nasty about it. He made a pass at me with his machete, but I gave him the old left-right before he got fairly into action. Clipped him on the chin. When he came to, all his stuff was moved out of the camp and packed for him. I paid him out of my own pocket so we wouldn't have him hanging around, waiting for the pay car. He bled a little on the grass there. You should have seen his dramatic exit—lots of cussing, with appropriate gestures, and a promise to come back for my life blood to square matters."

"He'll keep his promise, too," said Travis. "If I was you I'd get myself transferred to some other farm."

"Horse feathers! He'll move up the line, and by tomorrow he'll have talked some other overseer

into a better job than he had here." He laughed.

Travis did not laugh. He was not at all pleased at the way the Malero business was developing. Holloway had come out of it stronger and more firmly entrenched than ever. His prestige among the *mozos* was considerably heightened by his warding off Malero's attack bare handed. Wellington was particularly impressed. On learning what had happened, he immediately returned to his house to put on a new hat he had bought—a wide brimmed hat as nearly like Holloway's as he could find—and had been saving for a suitable occasion. The dismissal of the insubordinate Malero was certainly an occasion for the negro foreman. From now on he would be whistling "The Stars and Stripes Forever" without a break . . .

But Travis knew that the Malero business was by no means finished. Holloway might be more than ever intolerably efficient, but Malero would be back. He would appear on the farm some night, wild with *guaro,* and strike from the rear. He might even be drunk enough to attack from the front.

For the week following his discharge, nothing was heard of Malero except an unconfirmed rumor that he was living with some friends who worked for an independent planter across the river. The first definite sign of him came one Saturday night when Herford and Quale, overseer and timekeeper from the next company farm down the line, had come over to Winchona to play poker with Travis and Holloway.

It was one of those breathless evenings that make a man's shirt cling to the small of his back, when the humidity crawls on the back of his neck and fills his lungs like an ethereal cornmeal mush. There had been two rounds of highballs and the kitty had built up to a king pot when José, the houseboy, informed Travis in a stage whisper that there was somebody at the back door to see him.

"Who is it?" demanded Travis.

The boy said it was Wellington, *el capataz.*

"Why the hell couldn't he phone?" Travis wanted to know.

José had no idea why he couldn't have phoned. All he knew was that the *capataz* said it was very important. Sensing that something was amiss, Travis tossed in his hand—which contained only a very small pair anyway—and went through the bungalow to the rear.

Wellington was standing outside. Even in the dark, Travis could see that the foreman was in a high state of agitation.

"He has come back," Wellington blurted, as soon as he saw Travis. "Maleero has come back, sar, and he is creezy drank!"

"Drunk? What's he want?"

"He is quite wild from drinking

white-eye. He sweers he will mardar Mister Hollowee this night, sar." Wellington panted.

"Where is he now?"

"He is shouting and chopping with his machete on the doors of the camp, sar. He says he is looking for that Conchita lady before he chops up. Mister Hollowee. He tried to chop that Conchita lady's husband, but the husband is a quite fast runner. He chopped the husband's brother slightly. My wife, sar, is locked in our house in darkness, pretending vacancy. That is why I could not telephoon from theer. I traveled on foot to warn you."

"Thanks," said Travis.

"Should I not better notify the *comandancia* so they can send soldiers to prevent Maleero mardaring Mister Hollowee and others?"

Travis stared into the night. He seemed completely engrossed in listening to the dozen varieties of frogs industriously vocalizing in the hibiscus hedge. They made strange sounds, some of which might have been taken for the cackling of a hen, but none for the croaking of a temperate zone frog. Suddenly Travis spoke.

"Never mind phonin' the *comandancia,* Wellington," he said. "Grab a mule and hustle back to keep an eye on things at the camp. I can get the *comandante* on the phone from here."

Travis went back into the bungalow without waiting for Wellington to reply. He passed the telephone on his way to the veranda and stopped. He glanced at the instrument, then went into his room for a handful of cigars. He stepped into the bathroom to look at himself in his shaving mirror. He wanted to see if he really had the appearance of a cold blooded fiend who would calmly allow a young man to be hacked to pieces. The face he saw in the mirror was that of a tormented and uncertain man, not in the least fierce. The face in the mirror seemed on the point of making a plea for Holloway as a human being, when Travis suddenly turned and left the room. Coming out, he passed the telephone again, but this time he refused to look at it.

When he resumed his seat in the poker game, there was a short silence. The three men stared at him. The blood had gone out of his face.

"Bad news, Travis?" inquired Herford.

"Gut ache," said Travis. "And here's just the medicine that'll cure it."

He poured himself half a tumbler of Scotch whisky and drained it straight in a single draft.

Herford looked at him quizzically for a moment, then started to deal the cards.

Mechanically, Travis picked up his hand. He was staring at Holloway. Lord, how he hated that efficient youth! He still wanted

more than anything to get rid of this menace hanging over his job . . . And this Malero affair was entirely Holloway's business, wasn't it?

It was Holloway who had fired Malero—Holloway who had knocked him out—all on his own initiative. Travis had warned the youth, too, that Malero was vindictive. And anyhow, would it do any good to notify the *comandancia?* At this time of night the *comandante* might not come himself. Suppose he sent a couple of barefooted corporals with their stripes fastened to their sleeves with safety pins—what could they do to Malero, the machete-man?

"Hey, Travis, ain't you in this game?"

Travis glanced at his cards.

"I open for a red one," he said.

He won the pot and called for another round of drinks. The muggy night made the glasses sweat huge drops. The bottoms stuck to the table as the men slid the tumblers toward the host with the bottle.

The boy brought more ice and soda, but Travis poured himself another gargantuan slug of straight whisky, and swallowed it. He was jumpy. Seemingly preoccupied, he started when some one spoke to him. He leaned forward nervously every time the telephone bell jangled for some other party on the district line.

Every time he won a pot, he called for another round of drinks. He continued to take his own whisky neat, and in astonishing quantities. He tried to remember how long it had been since he had drunk like this. A little color came back into his cheeks. The veins stood out in his temples. He acted not unlike a man who was afraid of something.

It was during Holloway's deal that Travis began to feel his liquor. It hit him suddenly, like a wave of vertigo. He rested his head in his hands. There came to his ears a faint roar, like the roar of a distant express train. He thought it was the whisky, until the roar grew louder. Then he raised his head. He knew what it was.

"The rain sure is loud on the bananas tonight," commented Quale.

"Two miles off, I make it," said Herford. "Be here in three minutes."

The intensity of the sound increased. The roar was now the great drumming of giants upon a million taut membranes. The rain squall struck the bungalow, galloped over the corrugated iron roof, gurgled down the gutters into the drinking water tank. A white curtain poured from the eaves, splashing noisily on the ground, driving a fine spray through the screen to the veranda.

"Comes from a funny direction," said Herford, as he watched the spray drench one end of the ve-

randa. "That rain didn't ride the trades."

Travis paid no attention to this remark. His head was back in his hands. Holloway tossed two chips into the pot.

"Hey, what is this anyway?" shouted Quale to Travis. "A poker game or a slumber party? Are you in?"

"I'm in," said Travis.

He tossed in the chips without looking at his cards. He raised his head to stare through the screen into the darkness. The rain had stopped as suddenly as it began, but the night was still starless. Travis knew that the shadow of the slinking form he had seen out there, the nightmarish figure of the man with a long machete, was something projected by his own imagination. Not that the man with a machete might not very well be out there. He wondered if he had not better call the *comandancia* after all . . .

His eyes rested on the bottle near his elbow. It was nearly empty—scarcely two inches left in the bottom. He removed the cork, put the bottle to his lips and let the contents slide down without even going through the troublesome muscular contractions attendant to swallowing. Then he looked at his hand.

"Cards, sir?" inquired Holloway, who was dealing again.

"Two," said Travis.

Why the hell was Holloway always so polite? Always flaunting that Southern gentleman stuff while he was priming himself to steal an old-timer's job. Well, maybe the Southern gent would lose some of his politeness if he happened to meet Malero tonight —Malero full of white-eye and spoiling for revenge . . .

Ace and deuce of hearts. Not much good to a man who was trying to fill a spade flush. He made a move to toss his hand to the center of the table with the discards, but the cards slipped through his fingers. His fingers felt suddenly very clumsy and unnatural. They didn't seem to be his fingers. He felt cold perspiration oozing out upon his forehead.

There was really no reason for telephoning the *comandancia*. In the old days an overseer settled his own troubles without getting the *comandancia* mixed up in them. Anyhow, Malero might still be at the camp. He'd call the foreman on the phone and find out. He'd do it now, while this hand was being bet. He made an effort to get up, but seemed afflicted with a strange paralysis. He tried again and again. He was glued to his chair. He made a final effort, a supreme mobilization of his nervous and muscular powers. At last he felt himself free of his cumbersome body which refused to leave the chair.

With a sudden wrench, he pulled clear of his body and floated right

through the ceiling, up and up. He heard voices very far away . . . What was it he wanted to remember about a telephone? Or was it something he wanted to forget?

"Hey, look at Travis! He passed out!" Quale exclaimed.

Travis was sitting with his chin on his chest, his eyes closed, and his lips twisted into a foolish smile.

"Ain't you feeling well, Travis?" demanded Herford, shaking his arm.

The only reply from Travis was a guttural sound that might have been a prolonged grunt, but which was more probably a curtailed snore.

"Let's put him to bed," said Holloway.

He and Herford carried the unconscious overseer into his own room and laid him on his bed. Travis did not flutter an eyelid. His fixed, sheepish smile made him look very old and helpless as he lay there in a stupor. Even the occasional snore that ripped from him did not make him less a pathetic figure. Herford and Holloway went back to the veranda.

"Sit down, you birds, and get on with the game," said Quale. "I'm behind, and I can't stand you two quitting without giving me a chance to win back a few quetzales."

"It's late," said Herford.

"Tomorrow's Sunday," countered Quale. "There's no fruit to cut and we can sleep. It's my deal."

As the game was resumed, three-handed, a debate was launched on the sudden eclipse of Travis. Holloway said it wasn't surprising, in view of the amount of straight whisky Travis had put away in a short time. Travis had been drinking like a man deliberately seeking oblivion. Quale said it all went to prove that drinking was a young man's game. Herford, who was ten years older than Quale, said it wasn't a question of age at all, but of some mysterious equation of stomach and kidneys—in a word, of the way you happened to feel when you started drinking. The triangular debate was never carried to a logical conclusion. It was stopped abruptly and definitely by a storm out of a clear sky.

The bright stars shining in a cloud rift over the bananas beyond the tracks were making luminous crosses through the wire screening, when a blast of wind swept the veranda. The air was suddenly filled with playing cards. A curtain of bamboo slats at the south end of the veranda bellied out violently, straining at the cords anchored under a heavy table. The curtain swelled, flapped, jerked, then snapped the cords free.

The table went over with a bang, scattering magazines and phonograph records. A fern in a painted gasoline can blew off a tabouret. The bamboo curtain slapped itself loose from its upper moorings and

came flying crazily across the veranda, to brush bottles and glasses to the floor in a shattered heap. Herford and Quale were buried under its green slats.

When Holloway extricated them, the three men looked at one another silently and solemnly. They knew the portent of sudden heavy winds, mortal enemy of the banana. As though jealous of the conquering march of modern methods in the tropics, nature is ever arising to strike dead that which she created and nurtured.

"There go half a million stems," said Herford gloomily.

"Maybe it's local," suggested Quale.

Herford had his nose against the screen.

"Local, hell," he said. "It looks like Winchona's blown flat. The wind's from the south, and it's still blowing. We got it, don't worry. Come on, kid, we'll have to get home to the funeral."

Quale followed him to the door. On the way out, Herford had a last word for Holloway.

"Tough luck to get blown down just when the old man is a bit blown himself," he said. "Tough for you, and maybe tough for him if the *jefe* happens along. Sorry I can't stay to help."

"I'll manage," said Holloway, as the two guests hurried away. "I'll get the *mandador* on his feet."

But getting the *mandador* on his feet was a hopeless job. Holloway's efforts to arouse Travis provoked only a series of incomprehensible mumbles. After a few futile minutes, the youth realized he would have to handle the situation alone.

He went to the phone, but the line was in use. Somebody else was reporting blow-downs.

Holloway went back to Travis's room and made further efforts to arouse the overseer. He tried whistling "The Stars and Stripes Forever" in his ear. He tried cold water. Results were negative. He went back to the phone and spun the handle to make the district superintendent's ring.

"Winchona's just been blown, sir," said Holloway.

"How many stems?" came the metallic voice of the superintendent.

"Haven't calculated yet, sir. I'll call back when I have."

"Is Travis out looking over the damage?"

Holloway hesitated a second. It would not do to report Travis out cold in a crucial situation.

"Why—Travis is here, sir. He's sick."

"What's the matter with him?" asked the superintendent suspiciously.

Again a brief pause.

"Why, he seems to have a touch of fever," said Holloway.

"Want the motor to take him to the hospital?"

"Oh, no; he's not that sick," said Holloway quickly.

"Then he's well enough to check blow-downs," came the sharp rejoinder.

"I can do it just as well—"

"I want Travis to estimate Winchona," the superintendent insisted. "I've got another job for you. You're to cross the river and find out how badly the independents were blown. Find out how many farms over there can still give me English fruit for a Monday pick-up. Is that clear?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right, call me back when you've got figures."

Holloway hung up. He made another effort to restore Travis to consciousness, but the alcoholic slumber was deep. The sheepish smile on Travis's face had changed to a frozen grimace of worry, but the position of his body had not altered. Holloway got his boots and slicker, and phoned Wellington.

"Listen, Wellington, I want you to ride out and help me figure how much fruit we lost in this blow-down," he said, when the foreman had answered. "I want you to—What? . . . Why in hell should the *comandante* be over here? . . . No, nobody phoned that I know of. . . . No, Mr. Travis didn't say anything—he's in bed, sick, if it's anything to you. . . . Say, to hell with Malero; we've got more important things to worry about tonight. We've got a blow-down on our hands. . . . Well, I'm not afraid of him, drunk or sober. . . . All right, come by if you want to, but I should think it would be quicker for you to ride out to check the southern sections. You wouldn't have to come this way at all. . . . You've got Malero on the brain, Wellington. . . . Well, I'll wait five minutes for you. If you're not here then, I'm starting out alone."

Holloway smoked a cigaret on the veranda, then went outside to wait. The wind had slackened and came in puffs, just enough to blow rain into his face. As he walked down the path, he saw a shadow running along the tracks. He made an instinctive movement with his right hand, and had a pang of dismay when he realized that in the excitement of the past half hour he had not thought to buckle on his holster.

Then he laughed at himself, when he recognized the shadow as the mule boy. Mercedes, said the mule boy, was at the labor camp, where the *capataz* had been riding her. He had brought Lupe instead.

Holloway looked at the luminous dial of his watch. He had waited five minutes for Wellington already. He would wait a few minutes more. Climbing astride the mule, he lighted another cigaret. As his cupped hands reflected the flare of the match, he mused that he was making a pretty good target of himself. Then he smiled as he realized that Wellington had

started him thinking of Malero, in spite of himself.

When he had smoked half his cigaret, he decided that Wellington must have followed his original order sto inspect the southern sections. For a moment he thought he had heard the foreman whistling, but the sound was obscured and confused in the noise of the rain. Probably imagination. He headed his mule up the tracks.

Holloway forgot all about Malero when he began to estimate all the bananas he had lost. That afternoon he could not see ten feet beyond the tracks because of the green ramparts of banana plants, and only a hundred yards down the tracks because of a curve. Tonight —or, rather, this morning, since it was past midnight—he could look across six miles of wrecked plantation beyond the tracks. Down the tracks, Holloway could now see the lights of Poltec Farm bungalow, four miles away. In between, the trees, heavy with fruit, had bent and broken like straws in the hands of a child. The feathery confusion of great leaves had been flattened out and lay desolate in the darkness.

For several hours he rode through the devastated sections of his farm. He was stunned by hte extent of the damage. He had had it impressed upon him, of course, that the banana plant was at the mercy of a dozen hazards; yet to see many acres of plantation destroyed in a few minutes, reduced to a sorry army of broken necked trees dragging their full clusters of green fruit in the black mud, was nevertheless a shock. At least twenty thousand stems of fruit had been lost in less than a quarter-hour of wind. He would phone in his report . . .

He was nearly back before he thought of Malero again—with a start. Again he laughed. Wellington must have been exaggerating a little. If Malero was really set on chopping up a timekeeper, he would have had ample opportunity during the last two hours, for Holloway had been completely off his guard.

Approaching the bungalow, Holloway heard the irregular put-put of a gas engine—probably the district superintendent's motor speeding over the rails to Winchona Farm or beyond. Holloway hurried his mule.

He found the district superintendent's motor stopped on the rails in front of the bungalow. The motor boy was just curling up under the canopy for a nap. Holloway interrupted him to inquire if his boss was in the bungalow. The motor boy said he was.

Holloway's pulse quickened as he climbed the steps. The veranda was still strewn with the wreckage caused by the wind—the crumpled green blind, the overturned table, the broken glasses and empty bottles on the floor. Holloway could

well imagine the deductions made by the district superintendent on his entrance.

Holloway found the superintendent standing just inside the door of Travis's room. He had apparently stopped short in surprise although his expression gave no indication of his thoughts as he stared at Travis, sprawled on his stomach crosswise on the bed, with his head and arms hanging over the near edge.

"How long has he been like this?" asked the superintendent, turning his head at Holloway's approach.

Travis stirred a little.

"I'm afraid we've lost at least twenty thousand stems, sir," said Holloway, as if he had not heard the question.

Holloway's voice roused Travis completely. His eyes opened, half bewildered, half hostile. He raised his head with difficulty, saw Holloway and the superintendent standing in the doorway, then, clutching the edge of his bed, turned over on his back and sat up unsteadily.

"I'm not drunk!" he exclaimed belligerently, if somewhat thickly.

The district superintendent said nothing.

"How's your fever, Travis?" inquired Holloway.

"Who's got any fever?" demanded Travis, making a clumsy effort to get his feet on the floor. "I'm all right, I tell you."

He closed his eyes, as though to shut out the sight of the room revolving about him on an inclined axis. When he opened them, he fixed his gaze on the two men before him. With an oath, he pointed at Holloway.

"You sneakin' little cockroach!" he shouted.

And from that modest beginning, Travis worked up to a high pitch that set the warm night air vibrating with some of the most resounding profanity that ever echoed from the shores of the Caribbean—and the shores of the Caribbean are by no means virgin to profane echoes. Then he tapered off again to end quietly by referring to Holloway as a milk sucking, back stabbing, underhanded brat, and a telltale skunk.

"You get me plastered," he charged, "and then go get the district superintendent to see what a mess I'm in. Well, I'm not plastered—".

"You're all wrong, Travis," the superintendent began. "Holloway didn't—"

"Don't tell me I'm wrong!" bellowed Travis. "I planted bananas down here when you was still wearin' rubber pants. When that railway out there was bein' laid down by a naked Indian woman with a baby on her back, I was here drinkin' *aguardiente* with her husband, in between him boltin' the rails together. I'm older'n the two of you together, and I know when

I'm right. I know this kid here is after my job—"

"Don't be ridiculous, Travis."

"Don't tell me I'm ridiculous, dammit! Don't I know every snivel nosed timekeeper wants to be an overseer before he's learned to tell his ear from a drainage ditch? This bright boy here thinks he's caught Old Man Travis with his trou' around his ankles. Well, let me tell you—"

"I can't listen to all this now, Travis. Winchona's been blown."

This announcement seemed to sober Travis about five degrees.

"Fine!" he exclaimed ironically. "Old Man Travis too drunk to report a blow-down. Why don't you fire me and get it over with?"

"Sleep this off, Travis, said the district superintendent in an impersonal tone. "We'll talk about it tomorrow."

But Travis was not to be denied. His eyes blazed. The bed shook as he tightened his grip on the edge of the mattress. This was the moment that had been hanging over his head like the Sword of Damocles for the past year and more. This was the worry that had been always uneasily present in the background of his thoughts, the situation he had feared because he saw it as inevitable—Travis impotent in a crisis while the young and efficient timekeeper went on functioning beyond all expectations. The moment had come, and they were still putting it off.

"You mean you won't fire me?" demanded Travis.

"We'll talk about it later," said the district superintendent.

Travis leaned far out over the edge of the bed. Thrusting his head forward, he bared his teeth as though he were about to snarl. He seemed to choke for a moment at the sight of Holloway, safe and sound, standing behind the district superintendent. Finally he managed to shout:

"All right, if you won't fire me, I'll quit. I resign, Fuller. Get me? I resign!"

Then he toppled off the bed ignominiously.

When Holloway and Fuller lifted him back, he was already asleep.

"Better hurry across the river," said the superintendent to Holloway. "I want to know how much fruit the independents lost. See Don Carlos Vida first."

Holloway left the bungalow by the back way. Beyond the hibiscus hedge the path was blocked by the ruined bananas. For a while he used his flashlight as he picked his way over the tangle of leaves and fallen stalks. As he approached the river he snapped out the light. Dawn was already silvering the muddy current and streaking with pale fingers the leaden bellied clouds that covered the sky. Parrots in pairs flew screaming beyond the river to the frontier, where twisted mist wreaths moved across

the flank of blue-gray mountains like restless phantoms.

As Holloway started walking along the muddy bank, the waiting boatman stopped munching a bean filled, folded *tortilla* and started his motor.

Travis awoke with an inch of unwashed wool upon his tongue and a feeling of impending catastrophe upon his soul. His skull was two sizes too small. The light hurt his eyes. He blinked. As he rolled out of bed, he was mildly surprised to find that he was fully dressed; he was wearing his bright red trousers. The discovery only served to augment his vague sense of disaster as he shuffled stiffly to the veranda. He sank into a chair, closed his eyes and shouted for José and a pick-me-up.

When he opened his eyes, the sight of the bananas blown flat by the wind brought him up with a start. His indefinable impression of something wrong assumed definition as memories of last night rushed upon him. Malero—blowdown—Holloway—district superintendent—resignation! . . .

The whole thing was a little unreal now, but he remembered quite distinctly having resigned. He felt a strange sensation of relief at the thought—no regret, only freedom from the fear that had obsessed him. He also felt a new surge of hate for Holloway, as he tried to piece together his impressions of the timekeeper, evidently in the rôle of informer, talking to the district superintenednt. Well, he wasn't through with Holloway yet. Before he left Winchona, he'd repay that nasty little trick of Holloway's.

As José brought a drink, Travis swallowed it with an exaggerated notion of refreshment. He wondered vaguely what had become of Holloway. It was noon; he should be back from across the river.

The desolate appearance of the wind wrecked plantation was accentuated by the steamy glare of the midday sun. There were no laborers about. The first gangs ought to be out clearing away the mess but Travis reflected, with a luxurious feeling, that he was not going to set the *mozos* to work. He had resigned.

For some minutes he had been uneasily watching what appeared to be a mobilization of *zopilotes* a hundred and fifty yards from the bungalow. The great, gray hooded buzzards were tremendously interested in something hidden in the ruined bananas a short distance from the tracks. A dozen birds circled gloomily above, while perhaps twice that number were either perched on broken banana stalks, or huddled on the ground with much awkward hopping and flapping of wings.

Twice Travis was on the point of walking over to see what the buzzards were doing, but he decided

both times that he didn't want to know. Probably just a mule, he told himself. A moment later he thought of sending the houseboy over—just to see what mule it was.

"José!" he called.

When José arrived, Travis stared at him for thirty seconds. The houseboy was wearing a band of green silk tied around his hair.

"Mix *un otro* highball," ordered Travis.

He lighted a *puro,* and found it had an unfamiliar taste. He continued to watch the *zopilotes.*

Ten minutes later Holloway came home. He walked up from the river and entered the bungalow from the rear.

"Wellington call in with figures on the southern sections?" he asked as he came on the veranda.

Travis jumped at the sound of his voice. He did not turn around.

"How the hell should I know?" he replied testily. "I don't work here no more. Didn't you hear me resign last night?"

"Forget your *goma* for a minute," said Holloway, "and tell me if the foreman phoned."

"Not that I know of," said Travis.

Holloway went to the telephone and returned a moment later. There were puzzled lines on his forehead.

"Say, youngster," Travis exclaimed, pointing with his cigar, "what do you suppose them birds are so busy about down there?"

Holloway took one look, then left in a hurry. He started down the tracks in as close to a run as a man ever walks in the tropical sun.

Travis saw the buzzards rise in a dark panic of wings as Holloway approached. He saw Holloway bend over something, straighten up, start back to the bungalow. The youth walked rapidly on his way back, also, but it was a different walk—a rigid walk, with arms swinging in short, stiff arcs, and fists clenched.

When the second screen door slammed behind him, Holloway walked over to Travis, stood above him a moment, then exclaimed—

"Criminal!"

"What's the idea?" asked Travis.

"You knew Malero was around last night?"

"Sure," said Travis.

"Why didn't you say something?"

"I tried to warn you about Malero once, and you laughed at me. Why all this fuss now?"

"He's killed Wellington," said Holloway. "It must have been Malero; chopped him from behind; dragged him into the bananas."

Travis grunted.

"Lucky it wasn't you," he said.

"I think it was meant to be me," said Holloway. "Wellington was wearing a hat like mine, he was riding my mule, and probably whistling something he'd heard me whistle. In the dark—"

"Malero'll be furious if he finds

out his mistake," said Travis dryly.

Holloway stared at Travis for a moment, then strode into the telephone.

The next few hours were busy ones. The *comandante* arrived, portly and pockmarked, pledged his entire garrison in the search for Malero, predicted an early capture and execution. The phone jangled continuously. The district office wanted new crop estimates and revised figures on the blow-down.

Division headquarters offered bright ideas for filling fruit allotments. There were three steamers to load at Puerto Justo next week, and bananas had to be found somewhere, blow-down or no blow-down. Cutting gangs would go out next day as usual. Launch and lighters would pick up the fruit of independent farmers who escaped the wind. Gangs were to be set to work cleaning up the wrecked sections of Winchona. There was a new foreman to hire, and an old foreman to bury.

Through all of it, Travis sat on the veranda, ostentatiously idle.

A little before sunset Holloway sat down and drank a highball.

"I needed that," he commented. "I haven't as much as set foot in my bedroom for thirty-six hours."

Travis looked at him. Holloway was red eyed from lack of sleep. Weariness made pouches under his eyes and slowed his movements. A reddish stubble covered his face.

"Durin' the spring floods," said Travis, "I went without sleep for four days."

"Nevertheless," countered Holloway, "I'm going to get fifty winks before supper. You'll stay for supper, I suppose?"

"Maybe," said Travis.

Holloway went to his own room, sprawled on the bed and was asleep immediately.

Travis then decided to leave before Holloway woke up. He would take a mule—at least as far as the district office. It would take him no time to throw his belongings together, because he had practically no belongings. There were some bottled goods, however, that he wanted to take with him. He walked silently in his stocking feet to the dining room. From the sideboard he extracted two full bottles of whisky and a bottle of brandy three-quarters full. He held the two whisky bottles in his right hand and the brandy bottle in his left—by the necks, like Indian clubs. As he hefted them, he had a sudden impulse to swing them across the young face of the timekeeper who would take his place as overseer next day. He went to Holloway's room.

Pausing in the doorawy, he regarded the unshaven face of the youth, mouth open in sleep. He had a peculiar desire to throw things into that gaping mouth. He took several silent steps forward. Then his eye caught something moving under the bed.

He saw a man crawling out backward. Travis stopped, watched him straighten up, get to one knee, then to his feet. The man's movements were deliberate but stiff, as though he had remained in a cramped position for a long time. Even from the back, Travis instantly recognized the man as Malero.

Malero stood a moment, looking down at the sleeping Holloway.

Travis continued to watch him with detached calm. He found himself wondering how long the Nicaraguan had been waiting under the bed for Holloway, and how he had managed to get into the house unobserved. He had probably come in before the servants were up, just after Holloway had started across the river.

Malero plucked at his belt. He raised his arm. There was a gleam of metal as he poised his long machete above his head.

The machete swung downward.

Travis suddenly whipped out his arm, hurled the two whisky bottles like hand grenades.

One bottle smashed against the wall. The other caught Malero behind the ear. He dropped forward, struck the edge of the bed and fell to the floor.

Holloway sat up in panic. He sniffed at the fumes of the whisky spattered on the wall. He stared open eyed at the blood on his bed. He winced when he discovered a flap of flesh neatly sliced from his shoulder and hanging down his arm. He looked at Travis, who had just seated himself in a chair and was extracting the cork from the bottle of brandy he still held.

Travis raised the bottle to his lips, replaced the cork and raised his voice to call the houseboy.

"José!" he shouted. *"Traiga un gran* piece of rope and damn *pronto!"*

Holloway looked down and saw Malero lying on the floor. He raised his eyes to look at Travis quizzically.

"Have some brandy?" Travis suggested, passing the bottle.

Holloway accepted, then began to give attention to his wound.

Travis seemed embarrassed, and avoided Holloway's eyes. He welcomed the arrival of José with a piece of rope. Malero began to stir as Travis knotted the cord about his ankles. He talked as he tied.

"Youngster," he said, "now that you're an overseer, let me tell you how you can keep little things like this from happenin' too often. Now in hirin' and firin'—"

"I'm not an overseer yet," said Holloway. "In fact, I think maybe if we saw the district superintendent—"

"I've seen plenty of him," bellowed Travis, as he pulled the noose tight around Malero's wrist. "I quit. I resigned. That's final. I don't change my mind."

"Listen, Travis," said Holloway. "Across the river this morning I mentioned to Don Carlos that you might quit the company. He told me he'd put you to work for him. When I came back, though, I decided I didn't want you around this part of the country, so I didn't pass on Don Carlos' offer. But just now— Well, how about being *mandador* for Don Carlos?"

Travis inspected the last knot, resumed his seat and took another drink of brandy.

"No more bananas for me," he said, wiping his mouth on the back of his hand. "Bananas is too tame, nowadays. A fella might just as well be growin' pansies, what with all the efficiency and writin' of budgets and reports. No, I been thinkin' for some time of headin' up into British Honduras. I hear they found gold on the Belize River."

NEXT MONTH—

The inimitable John J. Malone returns in
LIFE CAN BE HORRIBLE by CRAIG RICE

We hear an echo of the world that Eichmann knew in
SALONS DE BEAUTE by RANJEE SHAHANI

The irrepressible John and Suzy Marshal return in
START FROM SCRATCH by JAMES M. FOX

We meet an unhappy detective, in
A TIME TO DIE by DONALD E. WESTLAKE

and

We meet a very unhappy man in

JUDITH MERRIL'S NEW NOVELET

ONE TO A CUSTOMER

—in *THE SAINT MYSTERY MAGAZINE*

grandpa's beer hall

by . . . Robert Andrea

When I was nine, ten and eleven years old I went back each summer to my birthplace—a small town in Pennsylvania with a population of about a thousand. I enjoyed going back, even though the trip from Connecticut was long and tiring, because my grandparents still lived in the town, and there was a special place in my heart for them. When I was quite young, and my mother and father had separated for a few years, they had sent me to live with my father's parents. The two old people had received me with great warmth and affection, and the treatment I received in their home had made a lasting impression on me. I found that I was equally well received as I grew older; so I was often eager, almost anxious, to go back to the place where I had always been loved.

My grandparents had very little money. From what I had gathered from listening to the conversations of relatives, I knew there was a time, many years ago, when they had owned practically the whole town. But my grandfather was an especially generous man, and I learned that during the depression of the 30's he had kindly allowed the people who patronized the sev-

The author who has appeared several times before in the Saint, is presently stationed in Honolulu. He is one of the more promising of the younger writers we have brought you.

eral stores he then owned to run their credit up to fantastic sums. He had also loaned a great deal of his money to his friends, who must have numbered in the hundreds. Practically none of these people had ever paid their bills or their debts. I guess that explains why there were a number of people in town who avoided my grandfather like the plague, except when he was drunk (which was rather often).

Anyhow, from the first time I went to live with him, when I was a child of five years, to the time he died of tuberculosis, when I was an adolescent of fifteen, the only property I knew my grandfather to be the *legal* owner of was his own home. There was, however, another piece of property which he *seemed* to own, judging by his own words and actions, as well as, in fact, those of many of the townfolk. That was the beer garden (as such establishments were called in those parts) which stood across the street from his home.

Indeed, I presume that he *had* actually owned the beer hall at one time, since I often heard him say he had. But even to a child of my tender age it was fairly obvious that even if he did continue to have a great deal of influence in the running of the establishment, he was no longer the monetary proprietor of it.

This was vividly confirmed in my mind when I saw my grandfather get out of bed each morning, have his cup of black coffee, and trek off to the coal mines for eight or more hours, while Jake, whom I suspected was the man with the money, remained in the beer hall all day, sitting on his fat behind, interrupted only by me and a few of the other children, who often went to the beer hall in the hot afternoons to cool our tongues with a glass of delicious draft birch beer.

When my grandfather came back from work in the late afternoon he was usually as black as tar, and at times I could hardly recognize him. My grandmother told me he got that way from shoveling coal in the mines all day. I knew what she meant, because a few years before my father had moved out of the state of Pennsylvania, he had had just such a job at the mines. And he too had come home with coal dust all over his tired body.

After supper my grandfather would always take a nap. He always used the living room sofa for that purpose, apparently feeling that the large and luxurious bed he and grandmother slept in at night would be outraged if it were used for so plebeian a thing as a nap.

When he awoke he and I would go to Jake's Beer Garden (that was its official name, another thing which made me so sure that the Jake with the fat behind who served me birch beer in the after-

noon was the owner) and sit at one of the tables. I was the only youngster who was permitted in the place after five o'clock, and on Sundays as well.

My grandfather would order a large bottle of wine, and he and I would sit there all night drinking it—he more than I, of course. The other men in the place usually alternated between beer and wine. Hard liquor was not very popular in that locale.

There was often a bit of gambling going on in the establishment, usually with darts, pinball machines and slot machines. I was occasionally permitted to throw darts or play the machines when the place wasn't too crowded.

I enjoyed myself tremendously each time I went to the beer hall. My grandfather was quite a leader among the men who frequented the place. It was through his efforts that the dart board, the pinball machines and the one-armed bandits had been set up. And, of course, knowing that I was the only one of my age allowed in the place when all the men were there made me feel quite grown-up. Especially since the men seemed to accept me so completely. This was, no doubt, due to my grandfather's popularity, and I was equally pleased to be related to such a well-known and admired person.

It was not until I spent my third summer with my grandparents that I began to have any doubts at all about my grandfather's character. I had reached the magnificent age of eleven years, and in a youthful and immature sort of way I was starting to think for myself. Then, too, I had developed a code of moral behavior which was, to say the least, rather lofty and inflexible.

So when I discovered that slot machines were illegal in the State of Pennsylvania, I was shocked. Soon afterwards I learned that gambling at games such as darts and pinball machines was also illegal. I began to wonder how Jake managed to steer clear of the law. And I also began to feel immensely disturbed whenever I remembered that it was *my* grandfather who had brought about the illegal pastimes. The day that I found out it was unlawful for a liquor establishment to be open on Sundays was a particularly sorrowful one, because I had often heard my grandfather brag that it was through his special efforts that *Jake's* was open on the sabbath. Now that I look back on the situation I guess that I was pretty dumb not to wonder why they pulled all the window-curtains so closely together and used only the back door of the beer hall on Sundays.

One afternoon late that summer a police car pulled up into the driveway of my grandfather's home. I was a bit afraid of the police, having already had a few minor and unpleasant (for me)

skirmishes with them when they had mistakenly taken me for the one who had overturned a neighbor's garbage pail. I feared that the police had at last caught up with my grandfather's doings. I'll have to admit, though, that I was a bit glad to see that justice was going to triumph.

But when the Chief of Police entered the house—he had a flashy uniform, so I assume he was the Chief—he was smiling. This confused me at first. After listening to the conversation between him and my grandfather for a few minutes, however, I realized that they were old friends. I wondered if the Chief was one of those who still owed my grandfather money.

Just before the Chief left, my grandfather gave him several boxes of cigars, which I knew he had stolen from the tobacco factory where he had been lucky enough to get a new job a few months earlier. (He was getting too old and weak for the hard labor of the coal mines.) This act really shocked me, since I felt that it was probably a form of bribery. I had discovered another of my grandfather's sins: He was a corrupter of the law.

I never spent my vacations at my grandfather's home again, even though he often wrote to my parents and asked them to send me. It's true that he had been kind to me (and others), and he was good-natured (even when he was drunk), and that he was a man who was interested in the happiness of his fellow men, but the things I had learned about him that summer made me dislike him so much that I didn't want to see him again.

That is, not until I was old enough to know better.

And by then, he was dead.

THE SHERLOCK HOLMES PUB

Those among you who remember the exhibit here some years ago of Sherlock Holmes' study, will no doubt wonder (as we do) whether it is this same exhibit that appears to have ended up, not at "221-B", but some distance away, above the Sherlock Holmes house, a pub on Northumberland Street near Scotland Yard. The room is described as so "faithfully" produced that it has won for the pub's proprietor a special award from the British Travel Association. Once the Northumberland Arms, a part of the Northumberland Hotel, it was from there that Sir Henry Baskerville wrote to Mr. Holmes — — need we say more.

Here, in any event, you will find the meerschaum pipe, Dr. Watson's top hat and stethescope, Holmes' own cap and cape, the laboratory, his scientific library, even the famous dummy in the window that on one occasion saved the Master's life.

thugee as an art

by . . . Hassan Ali

THE HEAT came quickly, almost imperceptibly, in waves of blinding light. Only a short while ago it had been quite cool, and now, at the stroke of noon, we felt as though someone had suddenly flung us into a frying-pan. The vast prairie, bald, yellow, like the pate of some forgotten Indian deity, extended right up to the rim of the horizon, covered, as it were, with a cloth of fire. A yellow angry sun glared down from a cobalt sky, filling the entire space with his furious incandescence.

After a brief walk in the infernal heat, with not a puff of breeze to relieve the growing torment, I told my men that I could go no further, We had stayed too long for the shoot, and were now cursing ourselves for our folly. The sharks that infest the river Baghar had tempted us to our present misery. They had died, two of them, but not without whispering to the sun, their ancient pal, something about settling scores.

One of the hunters, Osman by name, stood stock-still at my words and, shading his eyes with his hand, began to peer into the distance. All at once, as though seized with St. Vitus' dance, he fell to running.

"Is he mad or what?" I asked.

From time to time we propose to bring you vignettes such as this which, in one way or another, describe the world about us. Hassan Ali is the pseudonym of a distinguished (and perhaps apolitic) Indian writer who has lived abroad for several years.

"He has seen something, *huzoor*," replied one of the men, smiling.

Presently Osman returned, leading a she-ass. "She'll do," he said, grinning.

At first I was loath to mount this sorry animal, but, remembering that better men had sat astride her before me, I jumped on her bare bony back. She kicked and shied, but my men urged her on.

In this grand style we covered a mile or so. Suddenly, without any reason, my charger refused to budge. The blows of the men simply made her lie down, thereby landing me into the dust. There was nothing to do but to trudge again. Luckily, we saw a hut not far away, and thither we made our way. From the multi-colored rags stuck in every nook and corner of the place I judged that this was the dwelling of some holy man.

The owner of the habitation, a short, pot-bellied man, with small glittering eyes and a triple chin, received me with great courtesy and at once invited me to step in. The room into which he took me was cool and shadowy, with just a hint of incense in the still atmosphere. I was made to lie down on a clean mat on the ground among a pile of large white cushions, while my men were put into the outer room, given a drink of *bhung* and sent round to fetch my horse.

My host returned and attended to me. He supplied me with a delicious drink and dried fruits. Then, with his hands behind his back, he stood scrutinizing me, a pleasant smile playing on his lips.

"How long have you been here?" I began, draining the cup.

"Not long," he said, in a curiously musical voice.

"Where were you before?"

"Somewhere on God's goodly earth."

"More exactly?"

"How shall I begin? I do not stay long in one place. Now here, now there. I keep rolling along. I have been to Hardwar and Mathura and even to the thrice-holy Benares. I have plunged my sinful body in the healing waters of the Kristna. I have seen all the holy places that a good Hindu should. Still, there is so much to see . . . so much to seek . . . Truth lies by the wayside, like a little orphan, or in little forgotten places . . . It is a bastard that no one cares for . . ."

"Ho! ho!" I said to myself; "what language he uses?" And then, aloud: "What is your occupation?" I asked.

He did not answer at once. He appeared to be reflecting. At last he said: "Brother, I try to bring light in dark places. It is my function to unite man with his Creator."

"Have you spent all your life in this noble pursuit?"

"One does not perceive the truth all at once. I erred a long while. At last I saw the light. At first I was a soldier."

"A soldier?" I exclaimed, looking

at his short legs and enormous paunch.

"Yes, brother, I was a soldier, and a good one. Went to *Vilayet* (Europe) to fight to end all fighting. Got a medal for conspicuous bravery. Came back, minus only my little toe ornamented with a corn. Found everything at home upside down. Could not endure the old ways. The fact is, I had gone white. So, finding nothing better, I took a job in the Collector's house."

"What collector?"

"You cannot know him: Morton Sahib; tall as a lamp-post with a face the colour of raw meat. But he was so good that you would think he was made of honey and milk. He was new to the job, and left everything in the hands of Kassim Khan, his clerk. Now this chap took to hating me because the Memsahib couldn't do without me. He said I had bewitched her with my *gut-mut*. That is what he called my English! Well, he was looking for a chance to ruin me. He said nothing but I had a feeling that he was watching every move of mine. This was bothersome, but I thought I had the Memsahib on my side, and so was safe. One day, however, after I had fleeced some countrified visitors, Kassim Khan glided up to me, took me by the arm and led me straight into Morton Sahib's room. There I was asked to undo my *cummerband*. As I did so, there fell from the folds fifteen rupees—that morning's takings. To cut a long story short, that was the end of my service there. The Memsahib took my side and said that all servants took bribes, but Morton Sahib was seized with a fit of honesty. He told me that I was dismissed, and gave me this bit of advice: 'You can do what you like so long as you are not nabbed. Once caught in the act, you are finished.' Anyway, I obtained a place as cook."

"As a cook! Can you cook?"

"Oh, it is all very simple. The sahibs eat only boiled or broiled things. Any fool can do that. This was a fine job. Easy work. Good income. Plenty of rest. The Memsahib left everything to me, and only appeared at meal hours. Most of the time she was in the gymkhana or visiting friends. However, one day, feeling lazy, I slept in the sahib's bed longer than usual. The fact is, I had taken two big shots of the sahib's whisky and one of his favourite cigars. This last had not agreed with me. Anyway, I woke up suddenly feeling an acute pain in my left ear. There was Jenkins Sahib shouting like mad. I was flung out, without pay, without any of my effects, aching all over. I just did not know what to do. I had not a penny on myself. Even my medal, of which I was so proud, was gone! No chance of a job now. I was so dejected that I thought of flinging myself into a well, and end it all. I was on the point of doing so, when a man

appeared from somewhere and clutched me by the arm, saying: 'Unhappy man, life is given to be lived, not to be destroyed. What ails you?' He was so good and understanding that I told him all. He laughed and said: 'You have been trying to be a white man. How do you expect the goddess Bhawani (Kali) to smile on you? Now be a good Hindu, and everything will go well with you. Come with me and I will show you how to win peace and prosperity here and hereafter.' I did not care what happened to me, so I went with him. He was a great man. He knew all about herbs and potions, about birds and beasts, about Shastras and Vedas. He taught me to cure many illnesses, to charm away evil spirits, to recite *mantras,* to discourse wisely on many subjects. What pots of money he made! There was not a village where crowds did not surround us, asking for this, that, and the other, and paying most liberally. Then I learnt that there was more money in religion than in any other profession. I had been a fool to have been pursuing shadows. Here was cheap wealth, and comfort and honour. All you had to do was to sell charms, to recite verses from the sacred books, to look wise. Well, after the death of my master—may his soul rest in peace!—I took his place. I have never regretted it."

"How long will you continue to fool the people?" I asked.

He was offended. "I'm not fooling them," he said, "but just giving them what they want. Indians are so unhappy! They need consolation. I comfort their bruised spirits; I make life more bearable for them." He paused and then added: "I'm not the only one to do it."

"What do you mean?"

"Ah, I forgot to tell you. I have organized a society, whose work is to go among the people in villages and try to console them, now that drink is taboo in holy India. There are sixty men under me."

"Selling religion?"

"No, not selling. Showing the path for a little consideration. If you have a toothache, don't you go to a dentist? And don't you have to pay him? Well, we are physicians of the soul. You can't get something for nothing. But—" he stopped and looked at me fixedly, "but I am on a mission here."

"Well?"

"And you can help me."

"I? How?"

"Let us talk business. I have been wishing to meet you, and this is a lucky chance that brought you here. Well, I want you to do two things for me: first, give me a certificate, saying that I can read horoscopes perfectly well; secondly, just tell your friends the neighbouring landlords that I can be relied upon. . . ."

"What more?" I said, laughing.

"That's all. Of course, I'll pay you for your services."

"Are you mad?" I said, seeing that he was serious. "I'll do nothing of the kind."

"I'm sorry you adopt that attitude. I have been very frank with you and told you no lies at all. I thought you would understand me and my work. However, if you don't do what is necessary, someone else will do it. Look what I have got here!" He dived his hand in his robe and produced a certificate from a Chief Minister."

"Aren't you satisfied with that?"

"In the cities, yes; but not here. Local people like local names."

"I'm sorry I must disappoint you," I said. "Here's something for your hospitality." I gave him some money.

He put the money back in my pocket, saying: "It's always wiser to take than to give. I fear you have no business instincts."

Here my men returned. They had all brought some gift for the holy man, who, on seeing them, smiled benignly.

Later, as I was returning home, I asked my *kamdar* (head man): "What do you think of that holy man?"

"Wonderful!" he said. "Absolutely wonderful! Done miracles. I wish there were more like him in this mad world of ours. Yesterday, by breathing into the face of Osman's little boy, he cured him of cough."

"But he is a humbug," I said.

"You musn't say that, *huzoor*. Without holy men what should we poor do? They are our only friends and well-wishers."

This threw me into philosophic reflections. Was this wandering sadhu an arrant knave or a really wise man?

HOW IS YOUR CRIME I.Q.?

How well do you really know your Underworld jargon?

For instance, do you know that a *coffee grinder* is a machine gun, while a *brownie* is a heavy machine gun, *dream gum* is opium, *ducker* is a Dodge automobile, a *cadillac* is an ounce package of cocaine, and a *Businessman* is a witness or a policeman who will accept a bribe?

If someone talks about an *angel*, they mean someone who is paying protection money, and if someone is suspected of being a *buzzman*, there's reason to believe he's an informer. On the other hand, if a *cannon* is doing the *buzz*, this means a pickpocket is working the purse-snatching racket in crowded supermarkets. If you're taken down to *Coney Island*, you're being third-degreed, while if you're *coming down the hill* in *college* you're serving the second half of your sentence in a state penitentiary. And if someone has been *cooking soup*, he's been dissolving a stock of dynamite in hot water to extract crude nitro-glycerine.

big game hunt

by . . . Miriam Allen deFord

MEN go out into the wilderness to kill animals. They do not hate the animals, nor is there an individual animal they plan to kill. They are merely hunting for game.

Penny Hill, an 18-year-old blonde file clerk, went out to the hills near her home in Daly City, California, to kill a human being. She did not hate her potential victim; she chose her target at random. She was simply hunting for someone to kill, "just to see if I could, and not worry about it afterwards."

As a matter of fact, she had met August Norry once before. But it was by the sheerest accident that he happened to be the person Penny murdered. Anyone else she had chanced upon, that Sunday afternoon, would have done just as well.

Of course there were people whom Penny (she was christened Rosemarie Diana, much too romantic a name for the kind of girl she turned out to be) did really hate. Her family, for instance. She hated them all, especially her precocious 13-year-old brother Ronald ("a real square") and above all her mother. If she had any rational motive at all for the senseless murder of a virtual stranger, it was to

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make them unhappy, to "punish" them. Ever since she was 13 (and arrived at puberty?), she had had a recurrent dream of killing somebody as a sort of cockeyed "vengeance" on her family. After she was apprehended she asked for truth serum to "make" her tell why she had it in for her mother. Finally she accused Mrs. Hill of having had an affair with the family doctor—a charge that both of them—and her father—vehemently denied. Penny's ambivalent love and hate for her pretty mother, and the sexual sublimation implied in daydreams of shooting, are both, of course, well-known Freudian phenomena.

Yet seven psychiatrists examined Penny, and all but one said she was legally sane, though they all agreed she was badly disturbed emotionally. She was a lifelong victim of asthma—now considered to be frequently a psychosomatic affliction—and her fingernails were bitten to the quick. She had got into trouble at high school for having liquor in her locker. She spent entire week-ends sleeping—sometimes for 26 hours at a stretch.

But she could control her abnormalities whenever she felt it worth her while. Her counselor at Continuation High School in San Francisco said she "presented no problems"; her boss when she was a file clerk for a big insurance company called her "very good—she never gave cause for complaint"; and the manager of the publishers' service bureau where she was mail clerk at the very time she killed August Norry described her as "a good little worker."

The good little worker took no time off from the office to commit her murder; it was Sunday, February 1, 1959 when she went to the hills not far from her home, carrying her revolver. She had wakened that morning telling herself: "This is the day I kill someone. If I meet anyone, that will be IT."

Unfortunately for him, it was August Norry she happened to meet.

Norry, a landscape gardener, had driven to an isolated spot in the hills where as a child he had often picked watercress with his father, for the purpose of dumping grass clippings out of his light truck. Once before, Penny had met him there by chance, had got into conversation with him, and had let him drive her home. But she didn't even know his last name, and she insisted he had made no passes or in any other way offended her. Later, when she felt she must find some excuse, she said he had "cheated" her by saying he was 23 and unmarried, whereas he was

*—The name "Penny Hill" is not the girl's real name, and is not to be construed to be the name of any actual person, living or dead.

really 27 and had a 20-year-old pregnant wife. But Penny didn't know that when without warning she pumped 18 bullets into him.

She walked up to his parked car —nobody knows whether she spoke to him first—emptied her pistol into him through the right-hand door, then calmly reloaded, walked around the car, and emptied it again from the driver's side.

She pulled him bodily out of the trunk, dumped him on the ground, and drove away. (The bloodstained car was found later, parked in a Lover's Lane.) Then she went home and with a good appetite ate dinner with her parents and her three young brothers.

Norry's body was found the next day. The search for the killer was complicated at first by the fact that the young landscape gardener had a local reputation as a philanderer. Before his marriage at least, he had boasted a lot about his conquests, and once he had found himself in trouble with the police because of one of them. So when a boy reported having seen a "freckle-faced blonde" on Sunday afternoon "driving like mad" in a car resembling Norry's, that still gave a wide choice of suspects. Daly City and its environs were full of freckle-faced blondes, any one of whom might have been a jealous discarded girl of August Norry's.

What broke the case was a triumph of police deduction by three inspectors from the San Mateo County Sheriff's office, Eugene Stewart, Milton Minehan, and William Ridenour, acting under Sheriff Earl Whitmore; and by Captain Roy Beecher and Sergeant Bruno Conci of the Daly City police.

The one solid clue was that it was "wadcutter" bullets that had shot August Norry full of holes. (A wadcutter is a bullet used in target practice.) Besides the slugs taken from Norry's sieve-like corpse, another box of bullets of this type had been found near the body.

Anybody can buy wadcutters, but target-shooting fans like to reload their own to suit their taste; and often they make up their expenses by selling some of their hand-loaded bullets to other enthusiasts. These were hand-loaded, so somebody had reloaded them.

These particular bullets had three cannelures—the indentations around the base of a cartridge which hold the lubricating grease. Three-cannelure molds are made only by a manufacturer in Connecticut, who supplied the names of four local distributors. But that didn't help much, since scores of the molds had been sold in the southern San Francisco Bay area.

Inspector Stewart weighed the gun powder in the unfired cartridges, and found more than the usual amount—i.e., they were so-called "hot loads." By visiting every store selling guns in San Francisco and in northern San

Mateo County, in which Daly City is located, the police got the names of five men living near by who were known to hot-load three-cannelure molds, and to sell some of the extras.

One of these five was Lawrence Schultze, a young man living in Colma, adjacent to Daly City. But here came another complication: Schultze himself was in trouble, charged with being part of an auto theft ring. He was evasive and reluctant, but when he learned that this was a murder case he consented to co-operate. A few months ago, he said at first, two boxes of his hot loads had been stolen from his car, he didn't know by whom. He gave the officers a sample of the lead he used in casting. It was sent to a spectograph laboratory in San Francisco and pronounced identical with the lead in one of the slugs from Norry's body.

Back to Schultze the inspectors went, and this time—after consulting his attorney—he changed his story and told them that "around the beginning of the year" he had sold a box of 50 cartridges for $3. The buyer was Penny Hill.

Penny, whom he had known for some time, had brought him a .38 revolver and asked him for ammunition for it; she told him she wanted to practice target-shooting. A few evenings later he went with her to the hills around Daly City and fired the revolver to be sure the bullets were O.K.

That was that. Minehan and Ridenour went straight to the Hills' house and waited for Penny to come home. When she arrived they took her to the San Mateo County jail in Redwood City, the county seat. She made no protest. Her shocked and bewildered parents were the ones who protested.

That was on April 15. The very next morning, at 5:30, she began confessing to the sympathetic jail matron, Mrs. Esther Brown. Mrs. Brown switched on the intercom, and unseen officers took down every word.

In a few hours they recovered all the rest of the bullets from a street drain in front of Penny's home, and then fished the pistol from another drain in San Francisco, in a district she passed through on her way to work.

The pistol? Penny had stolen that, two weeks before the murder, from the bedroom of a San Francisco friend, William Freeman. (Poor Freeman! The San Francisco police wanted to know how he got hold of a U.S. Army issue revolver with the serial numbers filed off, and why he hadn't reported it as stolen.)

The police could have got Rosemarie Hill a lot sooner if they had paid more attention to her neurotic compulsion to confess. In the first days after the murder she had sent an anonymous hand-printed letter to the San Francisco newspapers saying that "a girl friend"

of hers had committed the crime. She gave Norry's license-plate number as proof that she knew what she was talking about. What she wanted to know was whether there was a reward for turning in the murderer, in which case she would name her "girl friend." (Later, she said she wanted the reward to give the money to Norry's young widow!)

The letter elicited a lot of publicity but no reward offer, so next she turned up in her former office (she had quit her job the middle of February and hadn't looked for another) and nonchalantly announced to the other girls: "I'm the blonde they're looking for in the Daly City murder."

They laughed. Penny was always good for a joke.

On April 23 Rosemarie Diana Hill was indicted for murder by the San Mateo County Grand Jury. Her arraignment was postponed to permit full psychiatric examination. Joseph A. Murray, whom her parents engaged as her lawyer, said she bewildered him; between airy indifference and vicious outbursts, he found her a difficult client.

On May 26 she pleaded guilty (thus waiving a jury trial) before Superior Judge Frank Blum in Redwood City. Judge Blum set the hearing for July 28; he said he would base his sentence on what the psychiatrists had to say meanwhile about her mental condition.

There were three verdicts the judge could render: he could rule she was legally insane, dismiss the charges, and commit her to a mental institution; he could find her guilty of second degree (unpremeditated) murder, drawing a five-year-to-life indeterminate sentence to be served in the California Institute for Women at Corona; or he could sentence her to a straight life-sentence for first degree (premeditated) murder. By agreement with Assistant District Attorney Howard Hartley, the death penalty was not considered.

Penny had not been an easy charge for the officers at the county jail. She had attacks of temper, varied by complaints of illness, and threw one tantrum so violent that the matron had to call two sheriff's sergeants to control her. (That one was because she objected to the presence of Negro women in the "special hall" of the cell block.) "She's just anti-social," said the sheriff. "She calls everyone everything she can think of, and then she apologizes. And five minutes later she's off again."

Norry's parents tried to see her —"I just wanted to ask her why, if she never knew my son, she would want to do a thing like that," August's elderly father said pathetically—but she refused to see them. Then she promptly wrote them a letter inviting them to drop in again if they were "still interested." They did not accept.

At the hearing, on July 28, the reports of all seven psychiatrists were admitted as evidence.

Dr. Walter Rapaport, superintendent of Agnews State Hospital, testified that though the girl was emotionally unstable she was legally sane; he found her "alert, in good contact with reality, responsive, outgoing, and fully oriented." Dr. Theo K. Miller, superintendent and medical director of Napa State Hospital, and Dr. Elmer Galioni, assistant superintendent of Stockton State Hospital, fully agreed.

Only Dr. Bernard L. Diamond, who was retained by the defense, testified the next day that in his opinion she was suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, and therefore was unable to tell right from wrong. And even he added: "I must state regretfully that I regard her as dangerous to herself and others. She is entirely capable of developing another set of urges that could end the same way."

Throughout the two days of the hearing Penny, dressed in collegiate skirt and sweater, wearing white-rimmed dark glasses, and chewing gum and fingernails impartially, sat in insouciant unconcern. She spent most of the time scribbling notes to her lawyer and then crossing them out again. The most significant of them was: "Do you think my mother will be called?" But when her parents and her brother Ronald did appear in court, she refused so much as to glance at them. "I still hate them," she snapped.

On August 6, six months after Norry's murder, Judge Blum announced his sentence.

"The facts of the crime show premeditated killing," he stated. "This is a wilful, wanton murder."

He sentenced Penny to life.

"I'm a little surprised," she told reporters. "This is not what I expected."

As she left the courtroom for the last time, she asked only one question: "Is my mother in court?"

Penny was sent to Corona. Two months later she managed to talk her way out—temporarily. She convinced the prison psychiatrists that she was "very disturbed and in need of special psychiatric care." She was transferred to Patton State Hospital.

Once there, she immediately announced that all the symptoms that had impressed the Corona doctors had been faked. "So now," she said triumphantly, "I'm in a mental hospital and I've proved I'm sane, so you'll have to release me as cured."

"She's a strange one," commented the superintendent, Dr. Otto L. Gericke. "She freely admitted to our psychiatric staff that she had lied to the psychiatrists at Corona in order to be transferred over here. She was quite convinced that once we had found her sane, we would let her go free."

Did that mean that she really was insane? "No," said Dr. Gericke. "She has no psychotic ideation. She's simply emotionally immature"—a masterly understatement. Penny's own self-evaluation is an equal masterpiece. "I consider myself," she told reporters at her hearing, "a normal, average girl."

Of course she was shipped back to prison, but not before she had written to Murray, her lawyer, that she had a lot more to tell him than she had confided before. "I didn't tell you all the facts," she said. Hopefully Murray went to see her, but he never reported the results of the interview or did anything further about the case; obviously this was only another of Penny's subterfuges that failed.

The average term served in life sentences in California is nine years. Penny Hill will be eligible to apply for parole by 1966. Until then at least, it is closed season for big game hunting in the Daly City hills.

PHILADELPHIA'S POLICEMEN GO TO COLLEGE

Albert N. Brown, Commissioner of Police in Philadelphia, reports one approach to the problem of getting citizens to respect the men who protect them. They feel that they've found one way of getting better policemen and raising their stature in the community. They've done it by sending their policemen to college.

For more than a year (by the time you read this) over a hundred and twenty-five policemen, from patrolmen to captains, have been working on special and general subjects at Temple University, which will entitle them to receive degrees in Police Science and Administration. They're good students too, it seems. One is said to have gotten the only "A" given in a history course.

"Our men today", writes Commissioner Brown in a letter to *This Week*, "belong to a highly mobile, specially trained, professional group of crime prevention and law-enforcement officers. They must use the most modern techniques in psychology and human relations. In short, the policeman has become more than simply a 'cop'. In my opinion, college training for policemen will in coming years become as essential as firing a gun is today."

the hood is a bonnet

by . . . William O'Farrell

"The sedan," Mr. Morgan said, "is two years old. It's time to trade it in."

Mrs. Morgan frowned. "The station wagon's nine years older. Why not get rid of it?"

"As a second car, the wagon's good enough."

"It's always flooding. When it does I have to wait twenty minutes before I can make it start."

"So wait. You haven't anything else to do," he said.

They were at breakfast in their small but beautifully situated home in Southern California. Through the window they could have seen the ocean several hundred yards away and several hundred feet below. It was calm and blue this morning, and far out at sea white cumulus clouds drifted like fat airborne pillows, but neither of them knew this because neither of them looked. Oliver Morgan was fifty-two years old, his wife was forty-nine. He was an attorney who many years before had conceived the idea that a good lawyer is one who keeps his mouth shut unless it is to his advantage to open it. As a result, his lips had compressed

Years ago, while editing the Unicorn Mystery Book Club, *I was delighted to be able to bring to our readers several of William O'Farrell's effective novels. Mr. O'Farrell writes very few short stories. Which is why I feel particularly happy to bring you his present study of an unhappy man who must make an extremely difficult decision. . . .*

to a grim slit which did not seem incongruous with the rest of his thin, predatory face.

Janice Morgan was his exact opposite in appearance. She topped him by three inches and her heavy body was broad in proportion to her height. Her hair, having gone through a succession of color changes, had fixed upon a permanent pinkish red, and she had pale blue eyes which, when she looked at Oliver without his knowledge, assumed a gelid quality similar to the sheen of an iceberg. For twenty years these two had lived together, and for the past nineteen of those years they had thoroughly disliked each other. But they had never quarreled. Their mutual antipathy was too deep to be expressed in words.

"It's late," Oliver said, rising from the table. "If you'll give me the keys to the car I'll run along."

She picked up a fork and put it down again. "To the sedan? I need it, Oliver. I'm playing bridge this afternoon."

"Take the station wagon. You don't expect me to drive that wreck on the freeway two days in succession, do you?"

"Drive it as far as you can, then take a cab."

"I put it to you," Oliver said in his best courtroom manner, "that you're as capable of telephoning for a cab as I am."

"Perhaps," she said, "but this is a rather special party. You certainly don't want me to arrive at Mrs. Jamison's in a taxi."

All this in polite tones of reasonability, but Oliver knew when he was licked. He went to the garage and tried to start the station wagon. Twenty-one minutes later the motor caught and he was able to back it to the street.

Driving along the Beach Road he hummed, "Put On Your Old Gray Bonnet," as was his custom when preoccupied, and reflected on the countless small frustrations which, added together, made up the overall state of nullification that was his life. It seemed to him that they all centered about the continual bickering as to who at what time was to drive which car. He told himself that he had no objection to Janice taking it on—to her—an important occasion such as a meeting of the Women's Club, but it was ridiculous that he should be inconvenienced for no better reason than that she wanted to see a movie or play bridge. Yet this was happening with growing frequency. The station wagon had stalled on the freeway a week before, and the memory of impatient horns and the monologue of a traffic cop had been a source of acute embarrassment to him.

And so tomorrow—if he was lucky enough to get hold of the sedan—he would trade it in on a new one. And what would happen? The situation would get worse. Janice would come up with

a dozen new chivvying reasons why it was absolutely necessary that she borrow it. And once in possession she would manage to mislay the keys; she would insist that something was wrong with the motor and that it must be taken to the garage; she would do literally anything rather than give it up.

"Put on your old gray bonnet," Oliver whistled, "with the blue ribbons on it, and we'll hitch Old Dobbin to the shay . . ."

Miss Swanson, his secretary, gave him a subdued, "Good morning," when at last he reached the office. She was a mediocre typist and had difficulty reading her own shorthand, but she was decorative and very much afraid of him. These last two qualities made up for what she lacked professionally.

Oliver worked all day and went home at five o'clock. He went to bed at the usual time but the next morning he got up early, tiptoed into his wife's bedroom and took the sedan's keys from the dressing table without awakening her. He left the house and had breakfast at a drug store on his way to work.

At one o'clock that afternoon he entered the show rooms of the agency at which he'd bought the sedan, and told an extremely British salesman that he wanted a new model, same color, same make and same extras—and could he pick it up that evening and drive it home?

The Englishman's expression was a nice blend of sympathy and condescension. "Impossible, Mr. Morgan. Takes three weeks to get delivery."

"What's the matter with this one?" Oliver indicated the sedan beside which they were standing. It was in every way the car he had described.

"Sold, I'm afraid. The gentleman who bought it will be back in town next week."

"Oh, come now." Oliver summoned up what he believed to be a winning smile. "A small favor for an old customer? Why don't you ask the sales manager?"

The salesman shrugged. "I'll ask him," he said.

He disappeared and Oliver turned idly to inspect the other merchandise. The display consisted, beside the car he wanted, of another sedan and two convertibles. There was also—and a vague excitement stirred him the instant he saw it—a low-cut, light gray sports job with a black leather top, two tiny bucket seats and a hood which, by its length, must have housed enough power to propel a ship. It glittered with chromium and its sweeping lines made it appear to be eager for the road, on the verge of flying through the shop window and away.

The French have a saying, "In a certain corner of the heart one is always young." Oliver, looking at the sports car—it was a Raleigh Minim of British manufacture—felt that certain corner swell and

burst. Its contents flowed out, took over. He approached the car tentatively, opened the door, slid behind the wheel. He fit. The bucket seat was precisely wide enough to accommodate his posterior and not one inch wider. A wild thought flashed into his mind and slowly the corners of his thin lips twisted up into a grin. He shut the door and took a firm grip on the wheel.

The salesman's voice recalled him to reality. "A sweetheart, isn't she? Extremely popular at home—I mean in England. Twin carburetors, forty miles to a gallon and she cruises at seventy an hour."

"Cylinders?"

"Eight." The salesman walked around the car and started to raise the hood. "I'll lift the bonnet—"

"The what?"

"Sorry. Meant the hood, of course." He heaved it up, and Oliver climbed out to look.

He was no mechanic, but the motor was impressive. He poked his finger at one of the two carburetors. "Put on your old gray bonnet," he sang dreamily.

The salesman gave him a startled sidewise glance. "Beg pardon?"

"How much?"

"A year's unconditional guarantee goes with it—"

"How much?" Oliver repeated.

The salesman told him. "About the sedan in which you're interested—"

"I'm no longer interested," Oliver said.

Driving the Raleigh Minim, Oliver arrived home shortly before sunset. He parked in the drive and pressed the horn, which emitted an unmistakably foreign *bleep-bleep*. The door opened and Janice appeared, coming to an abrupt stop when she saw the sports job. Her eyes gleamed covetously. She came forward and stroked the glossy paint.

"Is this *it?*"

"This is it."

"It's ducky. Simply ducky. What a cunning leather top!"

"This is a British car, my dear. The nomenclature's different," Oliver told her. "The part to which you refer is the hood. What you would call the hood is a bonnet. The hood's detachable. You merely roll it up, stow it behind the cockpit."

She was uninterested in technical terminology. "Oliver, may I drive it? Just around the block?"

He got out and gallantly held the door. "Help yourself." He suppressed an anticipatory smile.

Janice started out with breezy confidence. She swung her right leg inboard and eased down on the seat. Then she looked puzzled. Her bewilderment grew when she tried to get her head in under the hood. She accomplished it but only by bending her neck painfully, and when she tried to pull her left leg in she couldn't do it. It wouldn't clear the door. She sat for half a minute in this uncomfortable bi-

furcated position while her complexion changed from pink and white to angry red. Then slowly she climbed out.

"Can't you make it, dear?" Oliver said sympathetically. "Too bad. Next summer when the hood's off, I'll run the car up close to the garage and lower you into it from the roof."

"You horrible man!" Janice said. "You incredibly selfish horrible little man!"

Oliver was shocked. He'd always known what she really thought of him, but hitherto she'd had enough good taste to keep her opinion to herself.

"Must you be so vulgar, dear?" he asked.

She could. She was. The dam of silence had been breached, and it never was shored up again. From then on she said exactly what she thought when she thought it, and she thought continuously. Oliver could even hear her muttering imprecations in her sleep. She gave him no rest at home, and fell into the habit of telephoning him at the office several times a day. She pulled her sister, Martha, into the act. Every other evening when he got home Martha would be there, glaring at him like the middle-aged and disappointed virgin that she was; and once her mother called long-distance to read him a newspaper account of what a judge had said and done to a man who beat his wife. Oliver got jittery. He took it out on Miss Swanson and finally fired her, and Miss Swanson had to put in a labor claim to get the two weeks' salary she had coming. He lost his appetite. In three months his normal one hundred and forty pounds shrank to a stringy hundred and twenty-five. Clients tired of his unpredictable moods and found other attorneys to represent them. Had he specialized in crime or divorce his practise would not have been so drastically affected—in Southern California the demand for such specialists exceeds the supply—but Oliver had started as a corporation lawyer. It began to look as though he would finish as one, soon.

The blow-up came a little after three o'clock one rainy afternoon in February. On Saturdays Oliver kept office hours only in the morning. Having exhausted all time-killing possibilities, he came home about one-thirty. A strange car was parked in front of the house. The station wagon was in the driveway, and he passed it to park in the garage. He heard the front door open and shut as he climbed out of the car, and he looked back toward the street in time to see a young man with a brief case hurry down the walk, get into the strange car and drive away. A salesman, he thought, and wondered what useless frill Janice had bought now.

From inside the garage a door opened on the kitchen, and he used it rather than walk through

the rain to the front door. He heard voices as he entered the house and assumed that, as usual, Martha was visiting her sister, but when he went into the living room he saw that Janice was alone. She was watching television, one of those women's programs he particularly despised.

She looked up, hearing his footsteps, and quickly turned back to the screen again.

"Who was the man just left here?" Oliver asked above the babble.

"A lawyer," Janice said.

Oliver hung his raincoat in the closet, thoughtfully sat down and pretended to read a magazine.

The TV prattled on. At two o'clock, when he might reasonably have expected her to turn it off, Janice changed it to another program more inane than the one that had preceded it. Oliver saw that no more information would be forthcoming unless he pried it loose.

"I'm a lawyer," he said. "Why not keep the business in the family? Why should you need a lawyer, anyway?"

"I'm getting a divorce," she said.

"An excellent idea." He took the magazine into his bedroom, shut the door. Instantly the sound swelled loud enough to blast his eardrums even through the wall. Janice couldn't possibly enjoy it; she was doing it for the sole purpose of making him uncomfortable. And she was succeeding.

Elation, which had been his first reaction to her announcement, faded; he began to speculate about a number of unpleasant angles a divorce suit might involve. Chief among these was the division of community property; he was afraid that his ideas and Janice's would differ radically. At two-thirty she switched channels again, to raucous jazz this time, and at three she shifted over to, of all things, a children's program entitled Captain Alligator.

Oliver threw the magazine on the bed and went into the living room. Janice wasn't watching the screen; she was standing at the window. He walked over to the set and flicked it off.

She turned calmly. "Thank you, Oliver. Switching off the TV when I want to listen constitutes mental cruelty. Add that to infidelity and my suit's as good as won."

Oliver wasn't sure that he had heard correctly. "Infidelity with whom?"

"Miss Swanson, naturally. Were there others?"

"Perjury, Janice? I'm ashamed of you. You know very well—"

She smiled. "I know, and so does Miss Swanson. But we'll both testify to that effect. Miss Swanson will do it because you treated her abominably, and also because I've promised her a small percentage of the settlement."

"There'll be no settlement!"

"Oh, yes there will. And it will

be a juicy one after the judge has heard my story. I'll take the house, of course, and at least half of everything else." Her smile grew broader. "But never mind, dear. I'll let you have the sports car. Satisfied?"

Oliver was facing her from the fireplace. Beside the fireplace in an iron stand were a small shovel, a poker and a pair of tongs. He didn't remember reaching for the poker, but the next thing he knew it was in his hand and Janice was lying on the floor. She lay on her back; only the whites of her eyes were visible, and her face was masked with blood from multiple head wounds. Oliver dropped the poker and felt her pulse. Her wrist was as limp and lifeless as foam rubber. He staggered to a chair, fell into it and wondered what on earth he was going to do.

Gradually, like slow motion photography of the growth and budding of a flower, a plan unfolded in his mind. He tested it and found it good. The station wagon would have to be sacrificed but the car was insured and, anyway, he no longer needed it. As soon as it was dark, in about three hours, he would carry what was left of Janice to a lonely canyon, arrange her realistically behind the steering wheel and push the wagon off the side.

The clock ticked loudly on the mantel. The time was twenty after three. Rain beat against the picture window. Oliver hummed quietly, staring at the rain. At three o'clock he washed the poker thoroughly, returned it to its stand. He also cleaned the floor and placed an absorbent bath towel under Janice's head. At a quarter after five the light began to fade. At five-thirty on the dot, the ringing telephone brought him trembling to his feet.

He would have to answer it. Later it might help establish that he had not left the house since coming home early that afternoon. He lifted the receiver.

"Yes?"

A voice he recognized as Martha's asked querulously for Janice. He told her Janice wasn't in.

"Well, where is she?"

"She went to the market. Any message?"

"This is Martha. I'm coming out your way. Tell her I'll drop in."

Oliver's hand, grasping the telephone, grew wet with perspiration. "I wouldn't do that, Martha. The weather's bad. It's practically a cloudburst."

She broke the connection without bothering to answer. Oliver slowly hung up, too. The backs of his knees were watery, and he stood for a moment listening to the erratic beating of his heart. Then frantically he went to work.

Janice's raincoat was in the closet, and he bent her stiffening arms to get it on. He found a white scarf in her bedroom and wound

it around her head. Death seemed to have multiplied her weight by two but he dragged her across the living room, through the kitchen and into the garage. Then he had to go back into the house to get her shoes which had brushed off in transit. While there, he put on his own coat and hat.

Returning to the garage, he peered through rain at the station wagon on the drive. Low clouds obscured it and this was in his favor; what the clouds didn't hide the walls of the garden would. He ran out, opened the car's door, went back to the garage, picked up the body in a fireman's lift. It was as heavy as a log of the same size and the arms and legs protruded like stiff branches, but he carried it to the station wagon, stuffed it inside. He climbed behind the wheel, turned on the ignition and pressed the starter.

A moist and whirring chuckle answered, and he smelled the greasy odor of gasoline. The carburetor was flooded. It would be all of twenty minutes before the car would start.

He couldn't wait that long. Martha might arrive at any moment. There was only one thing left to do. He got out, pulled the body free and carried it back to the garage. But when he tried to cram it inside the Raleigh Minim he experienced the same difficulty Janice had come up against. She didn't fit. As he had facetiously suggested to her, she would have to be lowered into the tiny sports car. That meant the hood must be removed.

He detached the hood, laid it on the floor, picked up Janice and forced her down into the seat. She was quite stiff now; bending her knees to the proper angle was a project in itself. But he did it and then, when he had her kneecaps scrouged up to her chin, the hood had to be screwed back in place again.

All this took time. It was after six before he was ready to leave. And backing out of the garage, he knew that his previous plan would have to be abandoned. It had been hard enough to wedge Janice into her present seat. Putting her behind the wheel, as she must be placed if his prepared story were to be given credence, would be impossible. The body would have to be abandoned in a spot consistent with another story that came to him as readily as had the first one. He backed the Raleigh to the street and drove toward the Beach Road.

"*. . . through the fields of clover, we will roam all over . . .*" Oliver whistled thoughtfully as he tooled the sports car through the rain.

He turned left at the junction and headed for a canyon which, cutting through the mountains, had its far end in a densely populated valley ten miles inland. He passed the fishing pier and a neon-

lighted restaurant, and then a lonely stretch of rock-strewn, ocean pounded sand. Two hundred yards ahead was a line of houses propped upon piles above the sea. It was on this stretch that he had decided to leave Janice, but it was still too early. Trucks roared by and passenger cars went scooting past. He continued south toward the canyon, turned into it and drove all the way to the valley before returning to the beach.

When next he approached the lonely stretch the traffic had considerably lessened. Clouds hid the moon and the only illumination came from his own headlights. He switched them off, made a U-turn and parked beside a steep bank that led down to the sea.

Slowly his eyes became accustomed to the darkness and he was able to make out a large boulder halfway between him and the houses. Hidden behind it, Janice would probably remain undiscovered until morning. The boulder was only about fifty yards away. Planning the operation, he found that it divided itself neatly into two parts, the first of which would have to be performed at utmost speed. Whisk off the car's hood, haul Janice out, shove her down the bank and jump down after her. From then on he would be able to proceed at a more leisurely pace.

Working from inside the car, he loosened the hood. Then, when everything was ready, when an interval came when there were no approaching headlights, he leaped out into the rain.

The hood peeled off. He dropped it beside the car. He opened the door, put one arm around Janice and both hands beneath her arms. He pulled. She stuck. Rigor mortis had set in and she could not be budged. Jackknifed at the hips and knees, the only way to get her out would be to sort of roll her forward and to the right.

He did this, and fortunately no car appeared until she was lying on the road. He shoved her from the bank just before a passing oil truck deluged him with puddled rain. Then he also scrambled down the bank and lugged her to the boulder. He tucked her up against it on the seaward side, and was about to leave when he heard the nearby excited barking of a dog.

His head jerked up. Not thirty yards away he saw a raincoated couple who, hand in hand, were apparently oblivious of the weather. They were giving their pet its evening walk; and the dog, straining at its leash, was barking furiously.

Oliver ran, but even in his panic he was careful to keep the boulder between the couple and himself. He climbed the bank, threw the hood into the car, slid behind the wheel and started the motor. Not until then did he look back at the beach. He drew a deep breath of

relief. The couple had safely passed the spot where Janice was concealed.

Safely? As he watched, the dog slipped its leash and dashed back toward the body. It stood six feet from the boulder and sounded the alarm.

"Here, Mike! Here, boy!" its master called.

The dog continued barking. The man and woman conferred inaudibly, then started back. Oliver swung the Raleigh Minim into another U-turn.

". . . on our Golden Wedding day," he hummed nervously racing home as fast as he could go.

He zoomed into the garage and, without stopping to replace the hood, found Janice's handbag in her bedroom, removed a small roll of bills and put the money in his pocket. The remaining contents of the bag he left undisturbed. Carrying it, he returned hurriedly to the station wagon, got in and pushed the starter button. This time the motor caught and he backed out of the drive.

Lights were moving on the beach when he arrived at the spot where he had stopped before, and a Highway Patrol car had parked on the road directly in line with the boulder. Oliver wasted no time. He threw Janice's bag and the ignition keys out the window, left the station wagon and went home on foot. It took him half an hour and he was exhausted when he got there, but he did not stop to rest. He put the hood back on the sports car and screwed it into place. Then he went into the house, burned the towel on which Janice's head had rested, and changed into dry clothes. At eight-thirty, three hours from the time the phone call had triggered him into action, he was at last able to sit down.

Instantly the telephone rang again, and again it was Martha.

"Put Janice on the line."

"She's not here."

"Not there! Where is she?"

"Went to a movie."

"You said—"

"I know what I said," he broke in querulously. "I said she'd gone to the market. She did. She telephoned from there that she was going to see this movie. It's over in the valley."

"In the valley!" Martha had an exasperating habit of repeating the simplest statements. "You let her drive to the valley on a night like this?"

"Am I expected to set up roadblocks? I'm her husband, not her boss."

"Well, Mr. Smarty-pants, you won't be her husband very long."

"So I've been informed," he said. "If you want to leave a message, leave it. If not, hang up."

Martha snorted. "You've got your com-uppance coming, Mr. High-and-Mighty. I'll be glad to see you get it."

"Message?"

"Tell Janice I won't be coming over. The rain's too bad."

"A pity you couldn't have told me that three hours ago," he barked into a phone that had suddenly gone dead. He slammed the instrument into its cradle and sat down.

The clock ticked, rain spattered against the window. At ten o'clock he made a cup of instant coffee. At eleven he changed to pajamas, slippers and a dressing gown. Shortly before midnight he looked up the number of the Valley Theatre, and dialed it.

"What are you playing tonight?" he asked.

"We *were* showing EXHIBIT A," a man yawned. "Last show let out half an hour ago. Bill changes tomorrow. We—"

"Thank you." Oliver hung up.

Then came the last of his chores, the only one he feared. It wasn't necessary for him to simulate nervousness. His hand shook as he dialed 116 and asked the emergency operator to connect him with the sheriff. The phone buzzed and a man said gruffly, "Sheriff's office." Oliver cleared his throat.

"This is Mr. Morgan, Oliver Morgan. I'm worried about my wife. Early this evening she drove to the valley to see a picture. She hasn't come home and in this rain—"

The gruff voice grew reassuring. "Well, Mr. Morgan, you just take it easy. No accidents been reported in the canyon. Lots of things could have happened; maybe she had a flat."

"You don't know Janice. If she'd had a flat she'd have telephoned me to come and fix it. I'm afraid—"

He was interrupted. "Did you say Janice, Janice Morgan?"

"Yes."

"Hold the line." The voice had changed again; it was businesslike. Oliver heard the man muttering to someone. Then he was back again.

"Sorry to keep you waiting. Lieutenant Wylie's on his way to see you. He should be there now."

"Why? What's happened?"

"Lieutenant Wylie will tell you. I think you'd better wait."

Oliver smiled briefly as he broke the connection. The wheels were rolling in the right direction. All he had to do was let them roll. And go over his story, talking himself into the role that he must play.

Let's see. First this Lieutenant Wylie would break the news about the murder. Then would come a sympathetic recital of the facts. The finding of Janice's body and the subsequent investigation by the police. That investigation could have led to only one logical conclusion: that Janice had picked up a hitchhiker who had stolen her money, killed her, driven the station wagon to the beach and hidden her behind the boulder. He had then abandoned the car and

either walked away or bummed another ride.

The story was entirely credible and Martha, unwillingly no doubt, would testify that she had called the house twice and that he'd answered the phone on both occasions. A man can't be talking on the telephone and at the same time out in a rainstorm beating his wife over the head. Oliver chuckled. He went into the dark kitchen and looked out the window at the drive. He got to the window just as a police car, turning in, sprayed him with blinding light.

Oliver jumped back. He stood in the middle of the kitchen waiting for the doorbell. It didn't ring, although he heard the car stop and then heard footsteps—but the footsteps weren't approaching the front door. They entered the garage. Oliver tiptoed to the door to the garage and listened. There was silence for a moment, then the footsteps started out.

Everything was fine. They'd just taken a casual look at the garage and come right out again. The doorbell rang. He went into the living room to answer it.

A big man with a flat face and meaty shoulders nodded to him. He wore unpressed civilian clothes. "Mr. Morgan? I'm Lieutenant Wylie, Homicide." He indicated a uniformed deputy sheriff beside him. "This is Deputy Wynn."

"Come in, gentlemen," Oliver said.

They came in and Wylie shut the door. He spoke to Oliver. "Put your clothes on, please, and come along with us."

"Why?" They probably wanted him to identify the body.

"You're under arrest for the murder of your wife."

"Janice is . . . dead?" Oliver looked and sounded properly horrified. He went into the bedroom to change his clothes. Both men followed, watching him with hard, unsympathetic eyes.

Oliver, putting on his jacket, shook his head as though to clear it. "Why are you arresting me?" he asked. "I loved Janice. She phoned that she was going to a movie in the valley. I haven't left the house since early this afternoon!"

The lieutenant said briskly, "Does it rain *inside* that little sports car? The interior is sopping wet. And the poker beside your fireplace might interest the laboratory boys. They can find bloodstains on things you'd swear were absolutely clean. Maybe when I look around the house I'll come across a wet suit of clothes. Finished dressing? Well—"

"Now, look—" Oliver broke in desperately. "Until half an hour ago the Raleigh Minim was parked out in the rain. Then I remembered, drove it into the garage and put the hood on. As for the murder, my wife was kind-hearted to the point of foolishness. She could

have picked up a hitchhiker or a dozen hitchhikers. She was driving the station wagon and there was plenty of room."

Lieutenant Wylie shook his head. "She wasn't driving anything. Her body was carried to the beach in a midget sports car. That's the only way we can account for the fact that in rigor mortis she was folded up like an accordion. If she'd been stuffed into the trunk of a big car, there'd have been signs of it: grease marks and the like. Any more theories you'd like broken?" he asked. "If not, let's go."

They left by the kitchen door, and Oliver paused in the garage to stare reflectively at the Raleigh Minim. It still glittered with chromium and its sweeping lines made it appear to be eager for the highway, trembling for release. Laughter gushed suddenly from his throat.

"I'll need money to retain a criminal lawyer, Lieutenant. Want to buy a sports car cheap? A bargain. Unconditionally guaranteed to land you in the gas chamber within a year—"

"Let's have no foolishness, Mr. Morgan. Come along."

"More carburetors than you can count, seventy miles to a gallon and she cruises at forty miles an hour—"

"Mr. Morgan!"

"The top's a hood, the hood is a bonnet," Oliver sang loudly. *"It's painted gray with blue ribbons on it, and we'll hitch Old Dobbin to the shay—"*

"Give me a hand, Wynn! Don't stand there with your mouth open. Grab hold of his other arm!"

NEEDED—MORE RESEARCH

The fact that steel pens were not introduced until 1780 once played an important role in a case. A man was being tried, charged with having forged two documents vital in an old woman's claim to certain estates. The signatures were tho only writing on the documents that showed the characteristic marks of a steel pen, and—since the man who was supposed to have signed the papers, William Penn, happened to have died in 1720—it was obvious that the signatures were forgeries. Additional proof was that neither signature was written in the iron-gall ink in use when the documents had allegedly been signed.

what's new in crime

by . . . Hans Stefan Santesson

WHAT, precisely, *is* your responsibility if you find yourself eyewitness to a murder?

Can the resultant publicity—the dredging up of old wounds—the heart-ache if you are that vulnerable—the distress, if you can be distressed—be waved away as one waves away annoying flies on a summer afternoon? And as embarrassed candidates protest that this or that gathering, undoubtedly in air-conditioned comfort, has nothing to do with their reluctance to comment on anything more than the weather, or on the distressing situation in Outer Parthonia . . .

John Stephen Strange's EYE WITNESS (Doubleday, $2.95) will no doubt distress many people who will read into its portrayal of the days and the nights of murder-witness Lily Logan more things than the author may have intended. It is a matter of record, however, that there have been moments in the history of some cities when the influence of what is politely referred to as "the underworld" has been felt in gentler circles. Lily Logan, distinguished actress, who found herself witness to a murder and who, though advised against this,

Mr. Santesson, editor of this magazine during 1956-'60 and former editor, between 1945 and 1952, of the Unicorn Mystery Book Club, continues his column of comments on current mystery and suspense novels which, in their variety, illustrate his frequent insistence that it is impossible to generalize about the genre.

did describe the murderer to the police, has reason to doubt every and all around her as she lives with terror at her shoulder during the succeeding days. But this is as nothing to the feelings of Police Commissioner Forbes and Captain Honegger as they realize where the trail leads and who is responsible, not only for the murder but for so much more . . .

Excellent! Strongly recommended!

I have commented, in times gone past, on Doris Miles Disney's ability to, in her books, justify my frequent insistence that so many of the novels in this field can be termed social portraits of our times. Her latest Postal Inspector story, MRS. MEEKER'S MONEY (Doubleday, $2.95), is an example of this ability to write about people whom you do not feel are contrived and whom you suspect may just *be* living on the other side of town. . . . It is this credibility of her characters—this warmly human quality of her writing—which always makes me, at any rate, welcome the appearance of another novel by Miss Disney!

John Sherwood will be remembered for his extremely pleasant MR. BLESSINGTON'S IMPERIALIST PLOT and AMBUSH FOR ANATOL. He now departs from these paths with his THE SLEUTH AND THE LIAR (Doubleday, $2.95), the story of seventeen-year-old Jim Marsden's discovery of Anne Barrow and of what happens to him as he faces the need for deciding whether she is a liar—*or* in danger. . . . Relaxing.

Michael Underwood's ADAM'S CASE (Doubleday, $2.95), except at moments when an annoyed police Superintendent must cope with a rather strained variation on the idiot-hero formula, is a pleasant enough (if not too credible) account of a young barrister's attempt to play detective, haunted by the pleading eyes of a woman who is murdered soon after she has talked to him. Good summer reading.

By way of contrast, there is E. L. Withers' study of a courageous woman, the Marchesa di Terracorvo, as reality catches up with her in HEIR APPARENT (Doubleday, $2.95), and she finds herself taking part in an intrigue against the Nazis in Italy. There is a tendency to forget that the world whose doings E. Phillips Oppenheim chronicled (as did others, in Europe, for that matter) did not collapse with the fall of the Hohenzollern and Hapsburg dynasties; it continued for still another generation, as a socio-political force, until another War was to leave Europe divided. The world that the Marchesa di Terracorvo knew was a world of changing values and standards—values and standards which, in

(*Please turn to page* 107)

elizabeth is me

by . . . Marjorie Lee Nevin

ELIZABETH is me and I am Elizabeth and the park is green and Elizabeth is happy and the sun is hot on the grass and the flowers smell good and the bushes smell good and the trees smell good.

Elizabeth is one-two-three-four-five years old and she would be older if she could count higher and now she skips in the park beside Nanny and Nanny is wheeling the pram and in the pram is baby sister.

Elizabeth is a big girl now, says Mommy. What a big girl says Daddy and it is lovely to be a big girl now and skip in the sun holding tight to Nanny's hand, like every day in the park.

"Let's sit here," says Nanny, and Nanny and Elizabeth sit down on a big bench shady-cool under big trees going up high in the blue sky. Elizabeth wishes she could climb up one and when she got there she would say "Hello God" and God would say "Hello Elizabeth" and she would climb down in time for supper.

Nanny is pretty, Nanny is snuggly. Nanny fixes the pram in the shade and Nanny's friend, the other Nanny, comes with her baby to sit beside them and they talk.

"Can I play?" says Elizabeth.

What does a small child really think of the world and of the people around him or her? And when does "instinct" warn this child that an adult can be dangerous?

"Yes, dearie, but mind you don't go aways," says Nanny. So Elizabeth jumps up and bounces up and down and hops on one leg and starts a game with twigs near Nanny's bench. Soon, when they talk, she can run to her secret hiding place.

The twigs are horses and the tree trunk is a stable and the horses are beautiful and Elizabeth makes the horses go in and out.

"Giddap!" says Elizabeth while the Nannys talk.

"Right near the park!" the other Nanny says and Elizabeth listens because the other Nanny's voice sounds funny.

"Oh no!" Elizabeth's Nanny says in a funny voice too "Was the child hurt bad? Did they catch him, the dirty. . . .", and then she looks at Elizabeth and stops.

Silly Nanny! . . . Silly grownups! As if Elizabeth cares what they jabber-jabber.

"The little girl's in the hospital, they told me, awful sick", the other Nanny said, "and the man got away . . . just left her under a bush . . .", and she whispered to Elizabeth's Nanny.

Silly grownups, always jabber-jabbering, silly silly. Now they were not looking. Now Elizabeth could run . . . slow at first . . . then fast as fast, across the hot green grass that smelled good to the big bushes at the edge, and now Nanny had not seen and Elizabeth was happy because she could play by herself and there were bees and there were butterflies and there were squirrels and there were birds and the flowers smelled good and the sky was blue, and everything was beautiful. And everything is always beautiful, Mommy says, because if you see no evil there is no evil.

"Mommy is pretty . . . Daddy is pretty . . . Elizabeth is pretty" Elizabeth sang. What a pretty little girl, people said, What a beautiful child, people say, How old is she?

And Elizabeth is one-two-three-four-five, and Nanny is not looking and Elizabeth says: *"Shh! Shh!"* and now Elizabeth creeps, creeps into the bushes on on far to her secret hiding place where nobody ever is but Elizabeth. And it is fun and the bushes are big and the trees are big and Elizabeth is all alone.

"Boo! Boo!" says Elizabeth.

Elizabeth reaches her secret tree and jumps out from the bushes to the little clear place and a man is there. He is sitting down with his back against the tree and he is an old, old man, old as Daddy and when Elizabeth pops out he jumps up and looks cross but when he sees it is only Elizabeth he sits down again and they look at each other.

Never be afraid of anything, says Daddy, and Elizabeth is never afraid of anything ever.

"Well! Hello Beautiful!" the man says, "I've been waiting for

you," the man says, "Are you alone?" and there is a big brown bottle beside him and he acts funny.

"Come over here baby. Give us a kiss", the man says to Elizabeth and Elizabeth stands still and looks at him.

Always be polite to older people, Mommy says, so Elizabeth takes a step closer.

His face has hairs on it, not clean-shaved like Daddy, who shaves every morning in the white bathroom with snow lather on his face and Elizabeth always watches and sometimes he lets Elizabeth shave too and bubbles get in her nose and they laugh.

"Come on girlie, don't be scared", the funny man says. "Here, want a piece of candy?", and he reaches in his pocket and holds out something in his hand.

So Elizabeth steps closer but not very close to look at the candy but it is dirty-ugh!

"That's better", the man says. "Let's be friends. Come here and I'll teach you a game. Come on, baby and get the nice candy. What's your name?"

Elizabeth starts to hop first on one foot then on the other. "Elizabeth Elizabeth Elizabeth", she sings, "and I am one-two-three-four-five."

"Come on baby, sit here beside me. Do you like stories? Do you know the difference between a boy and a girl?"

Elizabeth jumps up and down.

Always be polite, Mommy says. . . .

"If you come over here I'll show you" the funny man says.

. . . But don't talk to strangers Mommy says.

Which which which? Grownups are funny.

"You can't catch me . . . you can't catch me", and Elizabeth ran ran ran around the tree laughing at the funny man who got up and tried to catch Elizabeth.

"Wait, little girl, for me. Play nice."

"Can't catch me! Can't catch me!" and Elizabeth ran and ran in a big big circle . . . and be polite . . . and don't talk to strangers . . . and what should Elizabeth do?

"Catch me if you can," singsonged Elizabeth, "Catch me if you can," but he couldn't and he wasn't fast like Elizabeth and Elizabeth laughed and laughed and ran into the bushes and crawled like a bunny fast through the bushes shady-cool laughing laughing at the silly man who couldn't catch Elizabeth.

She creeped out on the sweet-hot grass and ran fast to Nanny; no one could run fast as Elizabeth.

"Nanny Nanny," Elizabeth called, "can I have an ice cream cone?"

"Where've you been you naughty girl, I was just coming to look for you," scolded Nanny smiling and

getting out money for an ice cream cone.

Elizabeth jumped up and down clapping her hands. "I was hiding! You couldn't find me! I saw a funny man but he couldn't catch me."

"Did you now, darlin'. I hope you were polite. Come now, we'll get your ice cream cone," and Nanny took Elizabeth by the hand and they walked to the ice cream wagon and soon it would be time to go home for supper.

WHAT'S NEW IN CRIME

(*Continued from page* 103)

their latter-day vulgarity, seemed a repudiation of everything that had meant something to her in her youth. . . . Uneven—but interesting.

Let me take this opportunity, by the way, of paying a long overdue tribute to the editorial judgment and sensitivity of Isabelle Taylor, who has been at the helm of Doubleday's *Crime Club* for so many years. It is impossible to get across to anyone who has not worked in this field, how immensely difficult it is to do what she has done, quietly and without fanfare, for so long. When you choose as many books as she must do over the year (I speak from personal experience when I say this) you must at all times remember that you are not selecting material for one person, but for a hundred-and-one persons. You must satisfy widely divergent views and opinions on what the mystery novel (the suspense novel, the detective novel) should be, views as divergent as socio-political opinions in this country. You must, in other words, try to satisfy the reader who seeks in these novels an escape from the reality of life around him, and you must try to also satisfy those who (like you who read this magazine, I think . . .) demand that these novels be more than substitute tranquilizers. . . .

This column's profoundest respect to Isabelle Taylor, editor of Doubleday's *Crime Club*!

To now turn to one more title—the publishers assure us, with obvious modesty, that "REGENCY BOOKS MEAN CONTROVERSY," and there is no doubt that Harlan Ellison's GENTLEMAN JUNKIE (Regency Books, 50 cents) fully lives up to this promise. Stories of "the hung-up generation," some of which have appeared in this magazine, GENTLEMAN JUNKIE introduces the startled reader to the lost and the damned, to the world of jazz musicians and beatniks and narcotic addicts (not necessarily one and the same, I hasten to add . . .), and to the world of the men who hate

and the men who translate this hate in seemingly senseless violence and anti-social behavior. The language will seem strange to some, until it is realized that this *is* the hip language of the lost and of the damned, particularly of the lost, in these days. . . .

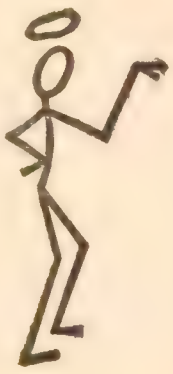
There is a danger that Harlan Ellison, as has been the case with some other writers, will be confused in the popular mind with this same world which he reports upon in a style which, to quote Steve Allen, "will fall strangely upon the ears of the elder generation." This would be unfortunate, because there is a depth and a sincerity to Ellison's writing—a depth and a sincerity and a disturbing realism (as in his AT THE MOUNTAINS OF BLINDNESS, which appeared in last month's SMM and is included in this collection) which both confounds and distresses those who feel that if some aspects of our society *must* be reported upon, this should be done with suitable Freudian incantations and a suspicious eagerness to linger lovingly over some passages.

Ellison has, no doubt, a word for this. . . .

A number of things about GENTLEMAN JUNKIE will no doubt disturb you. It *is* an angry report, in a series of brutally frank vignettes, of trends and thinking in our society which are, all too often, relegated to the tabloids and to the titter-sheets. And to social workers' reports. . . . It so happens that I know something about this world about which Harlan Ellison writes with such uncompromising bluntness and directness, and while there are times when I feel that the same effect could have been achieved with a shade less bluntness (the magazines where some of these stories appeared do demand a somewhat different approach to the telling of a story of course. . . .) I do recommend Harlan Ellison's often disturbing and often shocking portraits of the lost and the damned of this generation.

Read it.

And start worrying. . . .



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the art of murder

by . . . Norman Daniels

THE airliner was coming in for a landing at this mid-western airport and the warning sign flashed on. Alec Paxton adjusted his safety belt automatically. Travelling was second nature to him. He hardly took his eyes off the magazine he was reading and when the plane came to a stop, he reluctantly put the magazine aside.

He was a man of thirty-eight, a tall, slim, handsome man. Distinguished looking and debonair. Hired slayer was certainly not a term which would be used to describe him, for he looked nothing like a killer, which was one of the reasons why he was such a successful one.

He walked casually down the aisle, like someone wanting to stretch his legs a bit before the plane resumed its flight. He walked by the small, insignificant looking passenger without a glance. This man sauntered out of the plane also.

Alec Paxton visited the newsstand inside the airport building and bought a package of wild cherry drops. While he dug ineffectually at the cellophane wrapper, he watched the inoffensive looking

It is generally recognized that the impulse to murder cannot be confused with the purely professional and rather impersonal elimination of one or more persons, for a variety of presumably logical reasons. Assuming there be logic in these situations. . . . We look, here, into the mind of a professional who, obviously, has a different approach . . .

little man approach one of three phone booths at the far end of the terminal.

The airport building was ideally suited to Alec's purpose. It had been recently built and purposely made very large in anticipation of increased volume of business which had not yet come about. So the far end of the building was like a private wing. Some day it would contain magazine stands, ticket and reservation desks, but at the moment there were only three phone booths there. One of them bore a sign Volume Control For Hard of Hearing. The little man stepped into that booth and closed the door.

Alec popped a wild cherry drop into his mouth, sauntered toward the booth and removed from an inner pocket, an automatic pistol to which an efficient silencer was attached. He stepped up to the booth, pushed the door open enough to get his hand and the gun inside.

"I hope this doesn't hurt too much," he said affably, and pulled the trigger. Then he closed the door as the man in the booth disappeared from sight. From another pocket Alec took a regulation phone company sign, a little worn around the edges, and hung it on the booth door. It read *Out of Order.* He moved away casually, checked his watch and saw that the sweep second hand was only ten seconds off the time he'd allowed himself. The plane would leave in exactly three minutes. He moved toward it, smiled at a terminal policeman who promptly saluted him as a man of probable importance.

Alec was settling down in the plane, seat belt in place, when the insignificant looking little man he'd pretended to shoot in the phone booth, sat down beside him.

"How did it go, sir?" he asked.

"Ten seconds short, Hugo, which is margin enough."

"These dry runs do help, don't they, sir?" Hugo asked.

"Indeed. Could we have successfully assassinated twenty-one men in ten years unless we did make sure of everything?"

"I'm afraid not, sir."

"And this is the last one," Alec said. "It's going to be pleasant to retire."

"Yes, sir. It does become a bit nerve wracking, sir."

The plane taxied for the takeoff. "Nerve wracking?" Alec asked with a frown. "Hugo, what's nerve wracking about it? We've made an art of murder. For instance, I have no idea whom I will kill in that phone booth tomorrow. I have never laid eyes on the man. He may be a revolutionist, a spy, a gangster, a man intent on taking someone's wife. All I know is that another person has good reason to wish him dead. Our contacts hear of it, reach you and the details are

set. I kill the man. I have no motive, he has never seen me, nor I him. Nothing can connect me with the man or the murder. If those who hire me are suspected, they have unbreakable alibies and if they did want to talk, what could they say? There is absolutely no way of their finding out who I am except through you."

"And they can't find me," Hugo declared smugly.

"Quite true. In a way, Alec, our profession actually saves lives. Did you ever think of that?"

"No, sir, can't say I did. Those who—ah—encountered you wouldn't agree."

"Ah—but those who wanted their man dead, I saved. In every case, we know our client is willing to pay a great deal of money—a quarter of a million once—to be rid of someone. If our client is that willing to pay, he would very likely commit the murder himself if we were not here to take over for him. He would undoubtedly bungle the job, because it is a profession and takes skill and experience. So, bungling it, he would be apprehended and quite possibly executed. I look at it this way—at least, we save our client. The victim was bound to be killed anyway."

"Quite so, sir," Hugo said.

"And tomorrow, the last job. I'll be sorry to part company with you, Hugo. You're not only extremely efficient in our work, but you've been a friend and a valet as well. Losing you is the bitterest pill I shall have to swallow."

"All because of a girl," Hugo said morosely.

"Ah, yes, but what a girl. Hugo."

"I agree that no man can be in love and be a professional assassin at the same time."

"Nonsense, Hugo. I could manage very well. Being a killer is like any other business, though I'll grant the risks are greater. But so is the reward—and I have been very well rewarded. I can easily retire after this job tomorrow."

"I'd feel much better if you hadn't met the girl until after you retired, sir."

"She will not interfere," Alec assured him. "Of course she knows nothing about my profession, and she never will. Now, let's forget all this worry about making errors. There's absolutely no reason why we should."

Alec had lived at the Berkeley so many years he was practically a member of this fashionable hotel family. His suite was on the top floor, shared by Hugo. They lived splendidly, but they were able to save money too. As Alec often said, it was a very good line because there were no tax difficulties. A man who pays out a goodly sum to have a murder committed doesn't send the government a form 1099, reporting the transaction.

Alec handed his hat to Hugo, put

away the unloaded, silenced gun and then he searched his coat pockets, searched them again frantically.

"The *Out Of Order* sign for the phone booth," he said. "Hugo . . . did you see it?"

"No, sir. I didn't even look. You were supposed to see to it, sir."

"I know. I know. I was thinking about Jane. I must have left the sign on the door."

"You never made a mistake like that before, sir."

"A small one. Unimportant, Hugo. There'll be no more."

"Let's hope not, sir."

"Oh, come off it," Alec said patiently. "One more job—it'll go right. I'll stop thinking of Jane and concentrate. You know I always do when we're pulling the job."

"We also concentrate on the dry run," Hugo said. "Will you be going out this evening?"

"Certainly—with Jane. Why not?"

"That will be a first time too. You usually relax, think about what you have to do the next day, and go to bed early."

"Bosh. I can handle a simple assignment like tomorrow's, with half an eye open. We'll check a bit now. The victim is to board our plane. He makes the trip often and never varies in his movements. Am I correct?"

"He is hard of hearing, sir, and he's a slave driver. He reaches the airport with just so many minutes to take-off time and he always phones his office from that special booth for the hard of hearing, to give final orders to his staff. His secretary accompanies him to the airport only and always sees to the baggage while our victim telephones."

"There are no other special phones for the hard of hearing in the terminal?"

"I'm positive there are not."

"What are we worrying about then? It's as good as done. We timed it today. Chances are the body won't be found until after the plane is in the air, but even if it is, what's there about the crime to connect us, Hugo? Now stop worrying and compound two of those manhattan cocktails you're so famous for. I'll call Jane."

He telephoned to the public stenographer's office and Jane answered. She said she'd be right up. Hugo was busy in the serving pantry so Alec let her in and promptly kissed her. Then he held her at arm's length and savored the brilliant beauty of her. She was flaxen-haired, blue-eyed, matching his height well, and constructed along lines so many actresses advertise. With all this spectacular beauty, she was quiet and unassuming and charmingly unaware of the commotion she could arouse merely by entering a room.

"I'm so glad you're back, Alec," she said. "I missed you."

"For one day?" he chided, and drew her closer to him. "Thank

you, Jane dear. I like to be missed. No one has ever missed me before —except when I was a boy and my mother lived."

"You have to go away again tomorrow?"

"For the last time," he promised her. "When I return, we'll set the details for our marriage and I'll never leave you again. And this trip won't even be for overnight. I'll leave on the east-bound 8:50 and return in the evening. In time to have dinner with you, my sweet."

Hugo coughed discreetly and served the drinks. He withdrew at once and Jane commented on his lack of sociability.

"Oh, he's an old fuddy-dud," Alec explained. "The fact is, I think the man's jealous. Of you, my dear. But he has no reason to resent you. He knew some day he'd have to quit working for me."

"I'm sorry he wants to," Jane said. "I like him."

"So do I. Now don't feel sorry for him, darling. He's not just well heeled, he's wealthy. Ever since I've known him, he's talked of going back to England to live. He'll leave right after the wedding, and he'll be very content once he gets used to it."

They had their drinks and Jane hurried to her lobby office to finish some letters for Mr. Shilling, who also lived at the hotel and used Jane to do all his secretarial work. Alec prepared to dress for dinner at any one of the half dozen elite places where he was well known. Tonight would be very special. A dinner in honor of his last working day. After tomorrow he'd be a man of leisure. Not that he didn't expect to enter some genteel line of business, but he could take his time and pick what he wished. Or he and Jane could travel. He had cash in banks all over the world. It was going to be a delightful life.

Mr. Shilling had a surprise for Jane. "I find it impossible to leave," he explained, "so I want you to take a brief case of important papers to my Milwaukee office. They have to be there tomorrow and you may use my seat on the 8:50 plane."

"Why, that's wonderful," she said. "My fiance is taking that same plane on a business trip. I'll surprise him. Thank you very much, Mr. Shilling."

She didn't mention her trip that night. She had a gourmet's dinner with Alec and then they danced until midnight and he was reluctant, even then, to take her back to the hotel where she also lived.

He kissed her good night at her door and then took the elevator to his own floor. Hugo let him in when he rang, and Hugo was greatly annoyed.

"It's not my place to criticize, sir, but this never happened before."

"Do you mean my date with Jane?"

"Staying out all hours the night

before you have a job. It's most dismaying to me, sir."

"Nonsense, Hugo. What can go wrong? This job is so simple . . . comparatively speaking. Think back to some of the others. That would-be dictator eight years ago. When he moved from one room to another, he was surrounded by armed men. When he left his palace, a small army shielded him. There were four machine gun armed men in his bedroom all night—even when he didn't sleep alone. Now there was a challenge, but we got to him, Hugo. We reached him and we didn't leave a clue. Our victim tomorrow presents no problems. Go to bed. You're the one who has the jitters."

In the morning, Hugo left on a six o'clock plane so he'd be at the airport when Alec and the victim arrived. All Hugo had to do now was signal Alec the identity of the man he was to kill.

As usual, Hugo had connected the coffee pot with the timing clock so that Alec had fresh coffee when he awoke. He found the orange juice ready in the refrigerator, and he ate toast and marmalade in generous amounts. He would have liked to phone Jane and say goodby, but it was much too early so he dressed carefully, slipped another *Out of Order* card into his pocket, loaded the automatic and made certain the silencer was tight. He stowed the gun into a specially constructed pocket, surveyed himself in a full length mirror and thought he looked quite fit to go out on a job of murder.

He was icy calm, a man with a mission to fulfill. One more task and it would be over. Not that he minded what he was doing, but there was an element of risk, no matter how careful one might be. If this had been a really dangerous assignment, he might have returned the fee and pulled out of it, but the sheer simplicity of killing this man—whoever he might be—was such that he couldn't turn down the work.

The idea was to be as inconspicuous as possible on these journeys so it was best not to become involved with any of the passengers. Therefore, he invariably buried his nose in a magazine and looked at no one, especially a seat companion.

He was aware that a woman had sat down beside him and he was beginning to realize the perfume was familiar.

"Would you help me with my seat belt, Alec dear?" Jane said. "This is the first time I've ever flown."

"Good Lord," he cried out. "Jane!"

"Surprised?" she asked.

"I'm . . . overwhelmed. How did you ever . . . ?"

She patted the brief case on her lap. "I'm a messenger for Mr. Shilling, all the way to his Milwaukee office with papers to be signed.

Isn't it wonderful?"

"Yes . . . quite wonderful," he said, and then he was glad the plane began the take-off because Jane was too interested in the flight and he had time to think. Well, she was here and there was nothing he could do about it, except make the best of the situation. He did ponder the idea of giving up the job at hand, but decided that would be extremely unethical. They were depending on him, and if he didn't come through, there was no telling what dire consequences might seek out his client.

Jane was pleasant company. She chattered about the plane, the cloud formations, the earth below, and she was properly frightened when they started down.

"I've a most important phone call to make," Alec said. "I'll have to leave you for a few moments, Jane."

"Oh, that's all right," she said. "I'd like to stretch my legs too."

Alec had been deathly afraid of that.

He glanced at his watch. "We're running a few moments late and my call is expected, so I'll just run on ahead. I'll meet you at the gate."

He gave her no chance to argue, but fled from the plane while she stared at his retreating back in amazement, for up to now his manners had been impeccable.

He was shaking slightly as he entered the terminal. He was thirty seconds off his timing and sure enough, Hugo was waiting. Almost at the point of entering the phone booth was an angular, lantern-jawed man with a perpetual sneer engraved on his face.

There must never be the slightest chance of an error in these cases, so Hugo actually bumped the man, backed away apologizing. The man entered the booth. Hugo drifted toward the gate for he would board the plane here also. Alec never drew attention to himself by looking around, but this time he had to make an exception. It would never do for Jane to see him in the act of killing a man.

She wasn't in sight so he moved quickly up to the phone booth. The man inside was bellowing something about talking louder, what did they think—he could hear whispers? Alec pressed open the booth door so he could thrust the gun inside.

"I'm really terribly sorry about this," he said, and pulled the trigger. He threw the gun into the booth.

The man slumped down out of sight. Alec pulled the door closed, hung on the sign, removed the flesh-colored glove from his hand and thrust it into his pocket. He walked away from the booth without looking back. If he had taken this final precaution, he would have seen something interesting. From one of the other booths, a

man in a phone company uniform stepped out. He had tools holstered at his belt, a hand phone dangling from his waist and a look of intense surprise on his face as he stared at the *Out Of Order* sign on the phone booth which had recently become a coffin. He moved toward it while he glanced over his shoulder at Alec.

Jane was at the magazine counter. With her was Hugo, glum-faced and as nervous as Alec had ever seen him. Jane saw Alec approach.

"Why, Alec, you didn't tell me Hugo was to meet you here."

"Slipped my mind," he said. "Let's get aboard. How are you, Hugo?"

Everything was off schedule. He couldn't think clearly.

"Not well," Hugo said morosely. "It's one of my bad mornings, sir."

"Cheer up," Alec said brightly. "The sun's out. All's well."

"We fervently hope," Hugo said, unconvinced.

Alec took Jane's elbow, but she resisted. "Alec, please buy me a box of candy. I haven't had a box of chocolates in so long . . ."

"Of course," he said. He reached for a box at random.

"Oh . . . wait . . . I'm not sure what kind . . ."

"We haven't much time," Alec said.

"I'll hurry. Let's see, I don't remember if I like dark or milk chocolate best. It's really been so long . . ."

The newsstand dealer had an idea about a box that contained both kinds. She agreed that it was a fine thought. Alec had stepped down the length of the counter and faced Hugo, who'd signalled him that things were not well.

Hugo said, "A telephone repairman, sir. He's looking at the closed phone booth."

"It will take him a few seconds to realize what's happened. Hugo, take Jane aboard the plane. If I don't make it, see that she's provided for."

"Come aboard yourself, sir," Hugo said. "The telephone man worries me."

"They must have sent him to check on the *Out Of Order* sign I forgot to remove yesterday. Steady now . . . here comes Jane. I'll pay for the candy. We're on our way."

"Thank heavens, sir. I thought it was all over for a moment."

"Yes, I know. We'll clear the airport in two minutes. Time enough, the repairman is still puzzled." Jane moved up to them. "Oh, you were very quick, Jane. Shall we go now?"

They passed through the gate and were ready to board the plane. Jane cried out in dismay. "I forgot Mr. Shilling's brief case. It's on the newsstand. Alec, h'ed never forgive me . . ."

"Go aboard," Alec said.

"Sir." Hugo tried to restrain him, but it was too late. Alec was running back to the newsstand. Hugo firmly helped Jane aboard.

Alec reached the newsstand and recalled seeing the brief case on a pile of newspapers. It was gone. He glanced toward the phone booths. The repairman had finally made up his mind to investigate the closed booth and he was pushing at the door.

The newsstand dealer eyed Alec critically. Alec said, "A young lady left a brief case here a few moments ago. She bought a box of candy . . . I paid for it—remember?"

"What kind of a brief case, mister?"

"I don't know. I didn't pay any particular attention . . ."

"What initials on it?"

"Initials? I don't know. I didn't look. It belongs to the man she works for . . ."

"Well, what's inside?"

"I tell you I don't know. Just give it to me . . ."

"Nothin' doin'. We got orders, any lost property can't be identified . . ."

"It belongs to this young lady. She asked me to get it. My plane is leaving . . ."

"Then she better not leave if this brief case is so important . . ."

The repairman was backing away from the booth. Alec glanced toward the waiting plane. He suddenly ducked under the newsstand counter, bobbed up beside the startled dealer and hit him squarely on the chin.

The repairman was shouting something about police and murder. Alec eased the unconscious dealer down behind the counter, found the brief case on a little shelf hidden below the counter. He ducked down once more, but through the door in the stand he could see the terminal police heading his way.

He drew back. For the first time in his life, panic struck him. If he ran to the plane, they'd probably shoot him. He should have kept the gun. It would have given him a chance—but no, he couldn't have shot a policeman. He killed for pay, not to save his own hide. But there was a remote chance, if he could reach the plane without arousing suspicion . . . maybe . . .

A man he recognized came roaring through the terminal, intent on making the plane. Alec yelled at him. The man stopped, came over. Alec's shout had attracted the police and the repairman who was pointing an accusing finger at Alec.

The man on his way to the plane, was panting too hard to speak. Alec handed him Jane's brief case. "The seat behind you . . . a very pretty girl. It's her brief case. Please give it to her and tell her I'll be a bit late."

The man seized the brief case and headed for the gate at a dead

run. Alec moved quickly too. He raced along the narrow space behind the stand, gave a wild leap to clear the end of the counter and make a break for it. He didn't clear the top of the counter. A pile of magazines and newspapers were in the way and he slid off the top of the counter onto the marble floor. He told himself, rather wildly, that in his profession he should never have been content with only spectator sports. Then strong hands seized his arm, his shoulder.

On the plane, Jane was peering out the window. Hugo sat staring straight ahead.

"Here he comes," Jane said excitedly and Hugo was startled enough to look. It was the man in the seat in front of them. "Oh... it's not Alec," she said.

The man came down the aisle as the plane began to move. He handed Jane the brief case. "The gentleman told me to give you this, Miss. He also said he would be a bit late."

"Thank you," Jane said miserably. She looked at Hugo. "How long will he be, Hugo? He's missed this plane."

"Quite some time," Hugo said. "I'm afraid . . . Quite some time, miss."

SONJA PERSSON LEAVES STOCKHOLM

Who is—or was—Sonja? A twenty-two year old girl who likes to go to the sales held in the Spring, who has sewed many of her own dresses, and who likes Frank Sinatra. You get the impression that she is a shy girl, and also very charming and (a family trait?) very obstinate. She isn't much of a reader it seems—she likes her weeklies (*Maclean's*, in Canada, comes closest to what this connotes) and an occasional mystery (ah!); her sister, Margareta, is the book minded one, reading everything from Dr. Zhivago to the extreme opposite. She lived with her sisters in a large apartment in the center of Stockholm, from which she would sally forth to, as Sonja Persson, wander in and out of the stores and the milieu she loves the most, downtown Stockholm at the rush hour. . . . She likes Sinatra as I said. Also Harry Belafonte. Also Louis Armstrong, whom she has worshipped since she was young. And she likes to drive. And fence. And do a number of things which now that she is no longer Birgitta, Princess of Sweden, but instead the wife of Johan Georg of Siegmaringen, she *can* do. . . .

More on this subject some other time. . . .

monologue of murder

by . . . S. L. M. Barlow

If you two gentlemen of the press will make yourselves comfortable, I shall stand here over this old-fashioned hot-air vent. One of the great pleasures of life is to have one's skirts billowed gently in a warm current: a pleasure denied to males.

Those Chippendale chairs are more solid than they look. My brother tells me the whiskey is palatable. As President of the Antiquarian Society, I rather pride myself . . . But no matter. Forgive my digressions. I see you have a stenotype machine (what hath man wrought!) and I am glad to be quoted correctly rather than, shall I say, slapdash.

You have come a long way from Boston to procure a story for your newspapers, and you shall have that story. I admit reluctantly that there are all the elements of what nowadays is called a mystery, with a gruesome corpse and a sinister setting. But I suspect there was present considerably more misinterpretation than mystery and more of an inevitable, if not divine, Providence than of a diabolic plot.

First things first, as I always say

It is a little difficult to describe the genuinely distinguished author of this story of murder in this old American community that had seen so much violence—and so much heroism—in its day. Suffice it that we met years ago—that we had common interests then—and that I feel we are privileged to here bring you this story of a place that "creeps into the marrow as worms get into old wood, under the veneer." Now come with him into these shadows.

when I conduct a meeting at the Antiquarian Society. In good time I shall get to the distressing actuality, to Red McIver and Handley Walker, to murder and sudden death. But you realize, I am sure, how much old deeds incite to new ones, and you must forgive me if I tell you first of the old ones.

It was in 1814 that Abraham Wharf and his sister sat by a meager fire in their house on Dogtown Common, a desolate place even then. He was sharpening his razor. "Sister," said he "do you think people who commit suicide go to heaven?" and she answered, "I don't know, but I hope you'll never do such a thing." Without a tremor, "God forbid!" he said, and went out and cut his throat in the cave near Granny Day's swamp.

What has this to do with the present? Much, I assure you. You must know what gets into people, even such as Red and Handley, before you can tell what comes out of them. They had learned, both of them, about Abraham Wharf. That's why I beg you not to forget him. His ghost is not laid. Red and Handley, God help them, knew the old Dogtown lore; and I knew they knew it, for I'd told them a lot of it. And isn't it true that you get a deeper perception about a man and his motives when you know what it is he knows?

Yes, gentlemen, I am getting to the point, to my point. You know the facts; they are set forth in your own newspapers. You want from me the story, but a story is about 'why' and then, perhaps, about 'how.' The 'when' you know; yesterday morning. So what I am trying to tell you is the 'why'—that is *my* point—and that concerns the spirit of the matter. There is an inwardness and a luster to old furniture (look at that mahogany highboy behind you) which has a provocative emanation, if I may say so. Places, too, have their haunting qualities. Even people. And my point in this sad story is the spirit of the matter. When you hold the spirit of a thing, then somehow you know the truth—you know a fake antique from the real thing. And the truth is what you've come for, is it not?

Now, Dogtown is one of those places that creeps into the marrow as worms get into old wood, under the veneer. In fact, all the folk who lived on the back of Cape Ann, they are not just like others. There's a different hall-mark on them. There were no witch burnings here because everyone had a witch in the family. Just think of old Granther Stannard who pulled the teeth of Dark Younger (her real name was Dorcas), and because he bungled the job and left two protruding tusks she put such a hex on him that he thought his legs were made of glass. After that he was never known to run or even walk fast. Today Dogtown is the

only deserted village in all New England that I know of. There it sits, a small highland, with towns like Gloucester near by; but now it's the most lost and tortured place in the world. Those who lived in that desolation of rocky deformity took on some of the moraine's stony character. Scientists say it is the last spewings of a great glacier, but one rather feels that only a malevolent giant could have piled up those crouching monsters of granite which still seem to preserve a sort of suspended, ominous life in them.

We'll walk up there later. It's perhaps a mile from here where we sit. And not one single dwelling left there, though once, in the early eighteenth century, there were close to a hundred houses. (I myself have identified about sixty sites, from the old maps and registers. A fascinating pursuit, I assure you.) Even I can remember nothing but ruined cellars and tumbled pillars, and nobody has lived there in the memory of any living man. It is now a sweep of boulders and ledges, with oak, walnut and sumac creeping across the common, and everywhere the ruins and the long, long shadows.

That's your setting, and a sinister one. Please get that in your reports. It accounts for so many things. Both Red McIver and Handley Walker lived nearby, almost as near as I do. Red lived at Lanesville, and from his house he could be up on the Common in a half hour's brisk walk; Handley lived further on, at Pigeon Cove. I'd often find one or other of them up around Dogtown, sketching. They were both painters, (They were? They are? What should one say?) Well, anyhow, Dogtown Common is so much off the beaten track nowadays that only Sunday picnickers still stray up there, from time to time. Sea-road, railroad, lack of water, killed Dogtown. Dead, dead as a brass door nail, and I sometimes feel like the Sexton, for I'm about the last to be even interested.

I knew Red and Handley well. As I said, they were both painters. They'd come, separately, to Gloucester some twenty years ago —there's always been an artists' colony somewhere on Cape Ann —and each married here. They married cousins, Anta and Freya Norberg. There are a lot of Scandinavians in this neck of the woods, and many still make painted furniture and take steam-baths. Pretty girls among them, with blonde hair and pert faces. Handley married Freya and Red, of the red beard, married Anta. And it was because of an old Norberg inheritance that I got to understand them all so well. The quarrel ended in a ridiculous draw, but I must tell you about it. Oh, yes, I'm quite sure it's important, because of the Beech Pasture. What's that? Why, that's what gave me the feeling, gave me

as-it-were the spirit, the demoniac, evil spirit of this whole affair.

You see, besides being custodian of antiquities, I am also registrar. No, I don't hold with those who live entirely among dead things. I know as well as the next man that a ship is called from the rigging she carries, where the live wind blows, and not from the hull. But you've got to know both. What's below the water-line interests me also. As I was saying, I've known all about the old records, including the old Norberg deed. Some ten years ago that page was torn out, I don't know by whom. About five years ago, Handley came to ask me if he could see the tattered register. He was courteous and casual about it, as though it were of no consequence. He's always like that, in spite of being a big man. (When you see him, you'll notice his habit of fingering, I might almost say, stroking a large mole with black hairs on it, by his right temple.) A sensual man, but very courteous, some would say slick. Like his glossy black hair. Too many outside manners, to my taste. He is the sort who, with an appraising eye, would cross the street to help a strange woman on to a bus and then pinch her. A real gentleman, I feel, would do neither. He's always worn a broad-brimmed hat, and I've noticed, in my small study at the Society, that he rather smells of cosmetics. The next week, cousin Red wandered in as casually, but curt and untidy. Red was small and fine-boned, like ivory-inlay. He too asked to see the same page. When I told him someone had torn it out, he shouted. "By God, it's that damn Handley, the sneak!" And later in the same week they both came together to examine the register. Fortunately we were alone in the building—so few people nowadays are interested even in their own past or in the lovely craft of other days—for they began to abuse each other in the foulest language. Red thrusting out his tawny beard, Handley glowering under his suddenly rumpled black hair. They actually bristled. *Le rouge et le noir.* Violent men both. Red always was morose, yet that day the dapper Handley was the louder of the two. But for my presence, they would have been at each others' throats.

During the quarrel I learned what the trouble was, from the accusations each hurled at the other. The Beech Pasture had suddenly become valuable. There's a fine granite quarry there, and granite's coming back for public buildings. Both men knew it was in the Norberg family holdings, but to which of the cousins did it belong, Anta or Freya? Fortunately, I knew almost exactly what the will had said. It began with a preamble, of course. This explained that the judge of probate of Essex County, 1785 or 1786, appointed three freeholders of Gloucester to divide and

establish the Norberg estate. After the usual Honorable Sirs, it went on to say that there had been set off to the widow one full third part of the real estate of the deceased Salu Norberg, one lower room, on the Western side, privileges to the well and bake-oven and to one third of the cellar (I can show you the cellar when we go up), also one Cow Right, and lastly they set off to the widow her own land that she brought with her as dower, namely the Beech Pasture. And I remember that the whole of the privileges, not counting the Beech Pasture, was valued at twenty pounds. I wish you could have seen the crests fall on these two sparring coxcombs when I told them that obviously the pasture belonged to their wives jointly.

That battle scene, ridiculous at it was, remained in my mind. A disturbing picture of bad blood, to be further heightened with illicit if buccolic colors, for on a subsequent day I saw Handley escorting Anta, Red's wife, up on Dogtown Common. I felt it would be inopportune to disclose my presence. Not that I intentionally go unperceived, but the boulders up there are very high and I am a small woman.

One other cause of jealousy between them I must tell you. Paint! Gloomy and unkempt as Red McIver was, he was much the better painter. I suppose Handley knew it. If Red had a show at Gloucester, Handley would hurry to hang his pictures in Rockport. You may say this has little pertinence, but, gentlemen, remember that all this prepared my mind, alerted my intelligence. By such touches the pattern takes shape. You would call these the motives of crime. I would call them the patterns of life, perhaps even the designs of destiny. Yet with all this knowledge I had nothing of substance to unravel our case, as you would call it, till yesterday.

One month ago, on the 20th of October, was the opening of the gunning season in Massachusetts. Not much to shoot, but there are a few pheasant. Rabbits, too, if you care for them, which most of the folk around here haven't the sense to appreciate. Any more than they have the sense to eat mussels. That was the day Red was said to have gone away. Oh yes, he'd talked about doing so. In fact, he often disappeared, from time to time,—off to paint the sea, aboard a dragger out from Gloucester. Anta, his wife, never seemed to mind. I suppose these absences gave her more clearance for her embraces with Cousin Handley. Anyhow, I wasn't surprised, early that morning, to see Handley himself crossing from Dogtown Common Road to the Back Road. No, he didn't have his gun, which he should have. It would have been a good excuse for his being there at all. I myself had been up there by seven o'clock,

after mushrooms, since there'd been a week of rain which had stopped early that morning and the day was as clear as Sandwich glass. Also, there's a great patch of cardinal flowers up in the wood by the Whale's Jaw, a big, yawning rock.

He didn't see me. As I said, I'm not tall, and was down a foot or two in a potato-hole, where the old-timers stored potatoes. He looked about him when I called "good morning!" My voice was a sudden intrusion. I could see immediately that the fact that he was not alone, that someone observed him, quite startled him. He hesitated, even switched his course, and quickly turned into one end of a small clearing by Stacy's Pines, where Parting Path begins. Just then, up from Lanesville, at the other end of the clearing, walked a woman and her daughter, neighbors of mine. They spoke to him and that seemed to confuse him the more. For a big, sleek man, all *savoir faire,* he appeared to me to be unduly flustered. But he remembered his manners and swept off his hat, almost with bravado. Meantime, I was coming along after him and in a moment caught up with the three of them. We exchanged greetings, and then I stayed rooted to the spot where I was. Two reasons prompted me. For one, I'd seen some coral mushrooms under a pine. Handley fidgetted a while with his hat-brim, looking here and there about him, talking rapidly in a jolly way with the ladies, and finally the three of them walked away down the hill. The other reason I had for staying stock still was that, when Handley took off his hat with the usual flourish, a small white paper-like object flew out of the lining and stuck in the gooseberry bush, by the old Riggs cellar. He was too tall to see where it landed. I did.

No, no gentlemen. Not yet. I'll tell you all in the proper order. Let me proceed. After the three had disappeared down the path, I found the white object and put it in my pocket. Why? Bless my soul, would I see trash in that austere spot and neglect it? How often after the departure of Sunday night picnickers have I gathered a bundle of litter there and burned it in this fireplace here! One can, you know, desecrate even an unhallowed place. Oh, I will admit that when I picked up Handley's bit of litter I must have been unconsciously suspicious, and somewhat affected by Handley's odd behavior as well. The spirit of that man, as of Red—I had come to acknowledge—was wrong. A bar-sinister, as it were, on their souls. You see I have worried for thirty years to find out—which I never will—why an expert silversmith, working about 1760, after making a chaste and lovely Adams coffee urn, suddenly (and it's the same silver and the same date and the same craftsman) slapped on a handle en-

crusted with Gothic devices. It's wrong. It's not in the picture. Neither was Handley's behavior.

The next day, I heard that Red had gone off on one of his binges. Just current gossip and lightly disposed of. Nobody thought of it again. Nor did I. It was only day before yesterday that Mrs. Lurvey, who cleans for me, (particularly these brasses; a day's work I assure you,) let fall that gossip insisted Red had committed suicide. Where do such rumors come from? Out of the air, particularly out of bad air. It probably began because Red was gone more than the customary two weeks; and this was getting on to a month, I think you will never trace the source of that rumor. Maybe Handley started it, maybe Anta herself. Maybe it was a genuine fear that Red had died. But the word suicide set me thinking. As I have said, I knew that Red knew something I knew. He and Handley were educated men and interested in local lore. Right off the bat, I knew, if Red had killed himself, where, by normal association of ideas, he would do it. Yesterday afternoon, pulled by some remote power or perhaps by plain hunch, I set off to investigate. I walked up to Dogtown, along Dogtown Road, past Dark Younger's (the witch I told you about) to Granny Day's Swamp. Without turning right or left, I walked straight to old Abraham Wharf's cellar. Nothing there, but the lilac bush by the doorstep dropping its last leaves. Then suddenly I realized that I was not yet in the right place. Not the cellar, but the cave. That's where Abraham Wharf had cut his throat. In a few steps I reached the dark cleft in the rocks which was made darker by the tattered woodbine, no longer in leaf, but laced with purple berries that curtained the narrow opening. In the depths sat Red McIver, as he had sat for a month, the shotgun firmly grasped by his right hand, pointed under his chin, his throat ripped with the impact, his face a smallpox of shot. You, Sir, from the *Daily Record*. Your paper this morning carried a factual account. It said that Miss Rose Brimbal, the antiquary—I quote—found the body, that there were no marks of violence on it other than the blast of the gun, and that the only other mark was that of a cut or infection on the hand, now healed, which was well known to his wife and neighbors, since, for the week before his disappearance (namely the second week of October), he had worn a visible dressing. It could have nothing to do with the death which was therewith pronounced a suicide.

What happened immediately after my grim discovery was that I felt sick, physically sick. On seeing that shock of red hair and the staring eyes bowed over the mouldy chest, and that fine painter's hand (which he had bruised and infect-

ed weeks before, cutting it with a palette knife), propping up the gun, I was sick at the waste of talent. I felt emotionally nothing but pity. In this frame of mind, I sent for the police. For them, the rest was routine: to establish suicide. But not for me. After I had telephoned the Gloucester Police, I extricated myself, as-it-were, from this present you are so avid for, gentlemen, and thought of the past; of Anta and Handley; of the pasture; of the rivalry in paint. Then I thought of Red and his confidence in his art. Suicide did not fit. But murder did! I became more and more convinced—but what proof was there?

Now, of course, we know from Handley's confession of last night exactly what happened. Very early that morning of October 20th, Red had walked from Lanesville, with his gun, over toward Handley's, near Pigeon Cove. I believe Handley when he says that Red waited by a hedge to shoot him. And Handley, I believe also, did not have his own gun. Probably their trouble over Anta had reached the show-down stage. In any event, the opening of the gunning season furnished the pretext for a weapon. Red certainly knew that Handley would also be out on the downs early. They met near Handley's place, on the hill-path from Pigeon Cove. The fight began. Whom, what to believe? We will never know who started the altercation. What is fact is that Handley shot Red with Red's gun—though everyone round here uses a twelve gauge shotgun for birds.

Since death was instantaneous, there was little blood. What blood there might have been was washed away by the last spatters of rain before the sky cleared. But this murder at dawn was too near Handley's house for comfort, even with all the trappings of suicide. He had to move the body somewhere, far off, and quickly. Upon Handley's perplexed and hurried spirit came the mortmain of the past, with all his subconscious sense of form and fitness. He too remembered about Abraham Wharf. Suicide, suicide—the words brought back the tale. If that was what it should look like, why then the grave had been dug a hundred and thirty odd years ago. He slung Red on his back and tramped the short, hard path to Dogtown, by Granny Day's swamp.

Yes, I'll explain that too. You see, to make it appear a suicide, Handley thought Red's hand had to be clutching the gun. Actually, I fancy that the blast of a shotgun would make the hand fall, but, as our knowledge of forensic medicine is not great in this neck of the woods, no one has questioned that point. Handley, like all laymen, was also fearful of rigor mortis. Now, rigor mortis sets in who knows when, and Handley was concerned not only to wipe off his

own fingerprints but to preserve Red's. Red must be found gripping that gunstock. Obviously, then, Handley immediately after the shooting bound the dead hand around the gunstock before he picked up the body. Later, the last thing before he left Abraham's cave, after setting the dead figure in the right pose—Handley is not a painter for nothing—he removed the binding. It was then that he started walking home, furtively, and it was then that I called to him, on Dogtown Common. There that the ladies met him.

When I came home, after finding Red's poor body and after notifying the police, and sat quietly thinking, I became convinced, as I said, that suicide was no part of Red's makeup. It just didn't, on the positive side, fit the picture, any more than a Gothic handle fits an Adam coffee pot. On the negative side, all the special knowledge I had acquired concerning the personal feud came to my mind. With a bound, I may say—I rarely bound, there are so few things worth bounding for, and at my age—I hurried to the fireplace where I had, a month before, deposited what I called the piece of white trash which had fallen out of Handley's flourished fedora. Forgive me, but one might almost say his manners were his undoing.

You see, I came to realize that I had the perfect evidence. You remember that Red had had a bandaged hand. Now, after the shooting, Handley had set about faking and preserving the dead man's grip on the gun. On the way to the cave, previously, the corpse had to be jounced over by-paths for forty minutes or more. The hand-dressing, as you would expect, was bound tight with ordinary inch-wide adhesive tape. This tape Handley ripped off and then, after closing Red's hand over the gun, strapped tight again over the hand —and the gun. No jouncing would shake that loose.

Try to rip off a piece of surgical tape, as Handley did after he set up the body in Abraham Wharf's cave. You pry up one end of the tape with your thumb-nail and yank. Naturally he did not leave it *in situ* (even though I doubt if he gave it a thought as evidence). He simply, and reasonably, put it in his hat. Perhaps his wife was in the habit of going through his pockets. He could dispose of it a long way from Dogtown Common.

Yes, gentlemen, that's what I picked out of the gooseberry bush. That's what I rather innocently preserved. (It has not been cold enough for a fire in my fireplace as yet, luckily). No better evidence was possible. For it is, as you might say, double, ambivalent and retroactive. Adhesive tape is the only thing I can think of which at once imprisons a perfect print of the murderer's thumb and the quite identifiable red hairs of his victim.

(Continued from other side)

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